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Summer • 1948

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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

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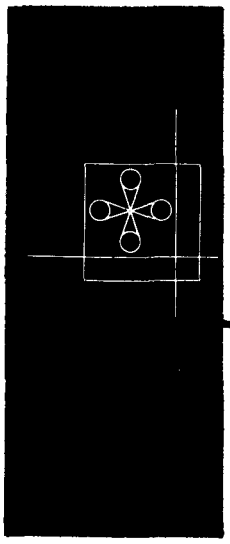

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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

VOLUME 17 *Summer 1948* NUMBER 3

The Faith We Do Not Trust

HAS THE WAY of the mind come to be a faith we profess but do not trust? By our creed, questions which concern us all are to be resolved by deliberation in the light of the facts, rigid analysis, the choice among alternatives. In our practice, answers emerge before issues are laid bare; an expediency becomes a course of action underwritten by the holy verities: the heavy weapons of propaganda put it across. And the decencies are denied to stubborn souls who will not go along.

In our government, officials arriving with the facts often discover that the decision has already been made. Not long ago the President, in demoting an able and fearless public servant, refused to give reasons. Since not even the rhetoric of a rational judgment was at hand, the matter was his "own affair." The R.F.C., by granting or denying loans, shapes the pattern of our national economy; yet it has never exposed to vulgar intellectual scrutiny what lies back of its judgments. The alphabet of administrative agencies is for the very purpose of directing private business into the service of the general welfare; yet its stream of decisions is attended with little publicity. In many a federal establishment, authority-to-act and knowledge-of-the-facts are hardly on speaking terms. In our language, "cooperation" is coming to be a word for blind obedience.

In the name of "free enterprise" we allow price regulations to be lifted when goods are not yet in free supply. We move to restore the reign of the free and open market, when vast areas of industry are

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private corporate domains. As we shudder at "the police state," we allow responsible public controls to be replaced by the irresponsible private controls of big business. We entrust huge federal expenditures for research to scientific politicos, whose highest conception of political obligation is to allow the resulting patents to become the property of private interests to be employed in making secure their monopolies. And to undo the harm, we set aside less than a thousandth part of this sum for a modest and discreet venture into trust busting.

We invoke the symbol of the Marshall Plan to shield a far-reaching foreign policy against critical scrutiny—a proposal which analysis shows to be not one, but many things. It is oil, and international politics, and national defense, and a bunch of subsidies, and an instrument of humanity. The oil question is imperative; sixty per cent by weight of all the materials we sent overseas during the war consisted of petroleum products; our domestic resources have not much farther to go. The real question is whether we are to become dependent upon a foreign supply or are to convert coal into a liquid fuel. The issue is between a great technological drive and a dumping of the expense of protecting Arabian operations upon the Government. The Marshall Plan forecloses the issue before it is raised.

So with the other issues presented. As to international politics, are we, as in Greece, to command our impotent dollars to turn back the tide of communism; or are we to render European soil infertile to the seeds of revolution? Are the subsidies, which the resulting large government purchases mask, to serve purposes more worthy than continuing capitalism on the dole? And is the support of reactionary government the world over the necessary price of giving vent to our law of humanity? The "Plan" needs to be broken into its parts so that our minds can get at it; within its confines, we should be allowed our studied choices.

This is a time of crises and of fears. Among our phobias the fear of the intellect is now rampant. Let's act as we profess, and really extend tolerance to fact, analysis, deliberation, judgment. Even in 1948 and in the United States, a case can be made out for resort to the ways of reason.

Walton Hamilton

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The Great Economy Act

Simon O. Lesser

LOOKING back on the economy drive conducted by the first session of the Eightieth Congress, one sees how much it resembled a circus. There was the same bustle, confusion and tension, the sense of something about to happen, the narrow escapes, the balancing acts in the wide blue yonder. There was the hocus-pocus which we did not so much mind, for we had come prepared to be amused and were responsive to the tangy come-ons of the barkers. Above all, there was the fact that the performance appealed to the child in us: it was fun to see Congressman Taber tame the ferocious bureaucrats and make even General Marshall sit up and beg for funds to run his "Voice of America" broadcasts. But once our sadism was roused, the performers were not immune. They could not protest if in the end we mistook some of them for clowns, and laughed more than was perhaps strictly justified when they came to grief. They had put us in the mood to roar at prattfalls.

Even the sedate New York *Times* was subject to this reaction. It came to the performance as hopeful and excited as any child, and though it said "No! No!" to the idea of sawing in two this or that program, it clearly hoped that *something* would get chopped off somewhere, perhaps in a far ring where it could not see what was going on. When it summarized the negligible results of the economy drive, its disappointment was evident. Lapsing into circus metaphor itself, it declared:

> Those who remember their circus-going days will recall the death-defying act, which was the highlight of the day. They will remember that just before

---

•With the OWI during the war, then with OWMR, SIMON O. LESSER writes from a background of experience in government as well as in private industry. Mr. Lesser has published in the *Nation* and other magazines, and is co-author, with Dr. George A. Works, of *Rural America Today: Its Schools and Community Life.*

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the roll of drums that preceded the climactic moment, the top-hatted master of ceremonies would step forward and make a brief announcement. It was an admonition to the audience, and we think it is one that may be appropriately repeated for the benefit of those who are inclined to wax too enthusiastic at this stage over the Republicans' economy act. What the master of ceremonies said on such occasions was: "Kindly withhold your applause until the act is over."

If the New York *Times* was disappointed because the results of the economy act failed to fulfill its expectations, there are others who were repelled by the whole performance. Before deciding when—or whether—to applaud, we had better give the act a close, adult look. Just what did it set out to accomplish, and what *did* it accomplish? If it failed to reach its declared aims, why was this so? What economies did it achieve, and were these economies desirable or undesirable? Were the performers expert and skilled? Do we want them to go through their paces again next year?

II

President Truman submitted his budget for the 1948 fiscal year to Congress on January 10, 1947. Expenditures were estimated at $37.5 billion and receipts at $37.7 billion. The budget was "balanced," but by so slender a margin that the President requested Congress to maintain taxes at existing levels, and to increase mail rates sufficiently to wipe out the postal deficit. For all its interest in economy, Congress deferred action on the latter recommendation, and only a presidential veto prevented taxes from being lowered.

The Republicans found to their sorrow that, despite its size, the expenditure side of the President's budget contained little fat. Recommended expenditures were $5 billion below the preceding year, and down almost two-thirds from the wartime peak. In anticipation of the economy drive, agencies exercised more than usual caution in their requests for funds. The President and the Budget Bureau reviewed requests critically, and cut them by more than $7 billion.

Most of the expenditures recommended to Congress were earmarked for inescapable obligations, as the following table reveals:

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	Billions
National defense	$11.3
Veterans' services and benefits	7.3
International commitments	3.5
Interest on the public debt	5.0
Tax refunds	2.1
Welfare items	1.7
	$30.9

Two things are immediately obvious from this listing. First, the proposed expenditures were very largely a heritage from the War. Secondly, they were highly inflexible. The large expenditures in the budget were items Congress could not reduce (such as interest on the public debt), or was extremely unlikely to reduce (such as veterans' benefits).

There remain the ordinary running expenses of the Government. But, contrary to the general impression, they constitute only a small fraction of total government expenditures. Congress faced insuperable—and foreseeable—difficulties, furthermore, in shrinking even this portion of the budget to prewar size. The Government, like everyone else, must pay steeper prices for the thousands of things it buys. Except for wage workers, the salaries of federal employees have lagged behind those of workers in private industry, but they are about a third higher than they were before the war. The workload of many federal agencies has increased sharply in size, and often in complexity. The Bureau of Internal Revenue had to deal with only 19 million tax returns in 1940; this year it must process 94 million.

Undeterred by such facts, the usually cautious Republicans rushed forth with fantastic predictions about the slashes they would make. Congressman Taber talked about a cut of $12 billion. With blood in his eye, he declared: "We now have nearly 2,300,000 civilian employees; we don't need over 500,000 at the most."

While some of Mr. Taber's Republican colleagues felt that he was going a bit too far, few of them appear to have doubted that the budget offered possibilities for major surgery. The Legislative Reorganization Act provided that by February 15 the House and Senate were to agree on a figure for over-all government expendi-

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tures as a guide to their consideration of specific appropriation bills. Conferees wrangled, however; the Republicans in the House insisted on a reduction of $6 billion, while their colleagues in the Senate, more temperate or more cautious, thought a $4.5 billion reduction would be enough. The debate, like some of the great disputations of medieval times, was never concluded. But both houses evidently began their review of appropriation bills in the belief that sharp slashes were possible.

When Congress completed its labors—on July 26, four weeks after the 1948 fiscal year had begun—the Republicans were forced to reduce their economy claims to $2.7 billion, and they found few people willing to accept even the marked-down figure. Taber sounded tired as he summarized the accomplishments of the economy drive. The Republicans had found that there were too many majors in the army ground forces in relation to the number of second lieutenants—and "a tremendous volume of cases where economic analysts and long-haired professors had been kept upon the rolls, at enormous salaries, to the exclusion of . . . people who could really do their work."

Many of the "savings" in Mr. Taber's summary tabulation were patently included in the hope that the hand is quicker than the eye. So that their showing would not seem too dismal, the Republicans resorted to a few bookkeeping tricks. One was to substitute "contract authorizations" for appropriations—to authorize an agency, let us say, to build a hospital, but to postpone the actual provision of funds. Another was to vote only part of the funds needed for some particular purpose or agency, and simply disregard the fact that the appropriation would have to be supplemented later on. For example, on the basis of carefully worked-up Treasury estimates, the President had asked that somewhat more than $2 billion be appropriated to repay the 25 to 30 million taxpayers likely to overpay on their income tax; Congress provided only $1.2 billion. This one economy "saved" $800 million—but since everyone realizes that tax refunds represent an inescapable obligation of the Government, for which funds will have to be found somehow, there were few cheers from the audience.

The President's annual midyear budget review, which provided

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a kind of official preliminary analysis of the economy drive, attempted to weed out such phony economies and at the same time be scrupulously fair. It gave the Republicans credit for almost $2.8 billion in gross reductions of appropriations; the exact figure, interestingly enough, was a little higher than the amount Taber claimed. But the review pointed out that deficiency appropriations of $848 million would be required to offset some of the cuts, and that $181 million of the saving was achieved by substituting contract authorizations for appropriations. Thus the net savings of the great economy drive amounted to some $1.7 billion.

The revised estimates for 1948 presented in the 1949 budget—which appeared this January when half the 1948 fiscal year was over—show some interesting changes in the over-all budget picture. Because of the constantly rising level of prices, profits and personal income, estimates of receipts were increased from the preceding January's figure of $37.7 billion to $45.2 billion. Largely because of the funds requested to implement the European Recovery Plan, total appropriations were also up sharply. Material changes were made in estimates of several categories of expenditures; it appeared that less than had been anticipated the previous January would be required for national defense and veterans' services and benefits, and that some $2 billion more would be needed for international commitments. But, interestingly enough, estimates of *total* expenditures remained almost unchanged. And recent figures, like those of last August, show that a $1.7 billion reduction in 1948 appropriations is the most that can be claimed for the celebrated economy drive. Nor does this tell the whole story, for as of January 1, with six more months of the fiscal year to go, Congress had initiated appropriation increases of upwards of several hundred million dollars.

III

In terms of its stated objectives, the economy drive was such a fiasco that one cannot avoid speculating on the question of why the Republicans stuck their necks out as they did. The incautiousness of their specific claims remains somewhat puzzling; perhaps they were too new to responsibility to realize that they would have to try to make good on their promises. But the more basic question of

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why they embarked on an economy drive is not difficult to answer.

The Republican party, like every other political party since the beginning of time, represents—however unconsciously and inexactly —a certain group of interests. By and large, the Republicans represent the conservative and propertied class—such people as well-to-do farmers, investors and the managerial group. And, with the possible exception of a weakened labor movement, no objective is so dear to the hearts of these clients as a scaled-down federal government. They want it to be smaller, so that their taxes can be reduced; weaker, so that it cannot effectively challenge their dominance.

One does not have to look far beneath the surface to see why Congress felt entitled to go home once it had passed the Taft-Hartley Bill and finished its consideration of appropriation measures. One Washington cynic declared: "The Republicans plan to take care of the campaign contributors in 1947 and the voters in 1948." But if the economy drive was primarily undertaken for the sake of the campaign contributors, it wasn't without its share of appeal for the voters. We are all sufficiently steeped in the New England tradition to bridle at the idea of waste and extravagance. With the Democrats in control of the executive branch, it was not to be expected that the Republicans would abandon such a staple part of their political stock-in-trade as talk about the swollen bureaucracy, government inefficiency, and overpaid long-haired professors.

The prospect of paying Uncle Sam fifty or a hundred dollars less a year in taxes has a singular vividness and attractiveness for the average citizen. In contrast, most of us are vague about the things our government does for us. Many of the activities of the Federal Government are basically of no more than potential value; when we became involved in wars, we want our army and navy to be strong, but we don't give them much thought in between times. Still other government services are of direct benefit only to certain regions or certain segments of the population. A still larger group are so technical and so indirect in their effects that it is difficult, if not impossible, to demonstrate their value to the man in the street. We all benefit from industrial peace and sustained prosperity, but probably not one person in a thousand could explain how the work of the Bureau of Labor Statistics contributes to these objectives.

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IV

Most of the discussion of the economy drive has been concerned with establishing the exact amount of the savings effected. But to stop one's analysis there is to fall into the trap of the Tabers. If spending less *per se* is a good thing, then it could be argued that the drive was of some value even if it saved no more than a fraction of its original goal. We might even jump to the conclusion that the drive would have been a greater success if it had hacked more deeply.

What we must really attempt to decide in judging the value of the economy drive is whether the appropriation cuts effected are desirable. We are subjected to such a steady stream of propaganda about how much the Federal Government costs, how much it takes from us, that we sometimes tend to forget that there is another side to the equation: what the Government gives us in terms of services, and even goods. To be sure, even if we come to the conclusion that a particular service is well worth its cost, we may decide that it is not being furnished as efficiently as it might be, that we can't afford it, or that we would prefer to spend our money in some other way. But we can't begin to think straight about the economy drive until we attempt to balance the savings it produced against the value of services which had to be reduced or eliminated.

Let us see, for example, what the effect of the economy drive was on two fairly representative departments, Interior and Treasury. They were treated neither with special rancor (as were some of the agencies which reminded Congress of the New Deal) nor with special lenience (as were the Armed Services).

Interior's budget was initially cut by more than one-third—from $296.1 million to $194.5 million. More than half of this saving was effected by reducing the appropriation of one unit, the Bureau of Reclamation. The Bureau is concerned with reclaiming and developing the arid and semi-arid lands in the West. Projects now in process of construction will supply water for irrigation to some 40,000 farms covering 3,875,000 acres, and will generate 2,250,000 kilowatts of hydroelectric power. One project, for example, will make new land suitable for cultivation in the Columbia Basin, to provide opportunities for veterans. Another project, partly defensive in character, is

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designed to prevent some of the richest farm land in the country, in the Central Valley of California, from reverting to desert as a result of the decline of the water level and the encroachment of salt water.

Reclamation projects are self-liquidating: once they are completed, the revenue from the water and power they distribute will be sufficient to amortize their entire cost. When we reduce appropriations for such projects, we are investing less, rather than saving. As a matter of fact, by proceeding with the projects at the slower rate set by Congress, we shall materially increase their cost. Because of such factors as overhead and interest there is an economic rate for the completion of any given reclamation project. Sharp cuts not only prevent a project from being completed at this rate, but may require that it be shut down and later opened up again—a procedure which is extremely expensive.

The real waste in not completing reclamation projects rapidly, however, lies in the loss of income that farmers would derive from irrigated land, in the loss of profits and benefits that individuals and business would obtain from electric power. Such waste seems particularly inexcusable when a project is well along the road to completion. For example, the Grand Coulee Dam, which is the main reservoir for the water needed to irrigate part of a million acres in the Columbia Basin, is now erected. Necessary construction for the distribution of this water was planned for completion by 1952, but at the slower rate of progress made necessary by the reduced appropriation will not be finished until 1960.

Congress belatedly attempted to make amends for some of the damage it had done to the reclamation program in the name of economy. The shortage of funds to continue work on four projects was already so acute when Congress convened for the special session in November that a deficiency appropriation of $32 million was quickly jammed through to prevent chaos. But this step was too little and too late to redress all the harm resulting from its earlier action. One project, for example, the Friant-Kern Canal of the Central Valley Project in California, had to be closed down completely on November 30 because funds for its continuance were exhausted. Because the construction firm is now asking for more money and because reopening a project is expensive under any circumstances, this one

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work stoppage will ultimately cost the nation several million dollars.

At the same time it hamstrung the reclamation program, Congress also slashed the budget of the two divisions of Interior which are concerned with the mineral resources of the country. These resources have been depleted to the danger point. We entered the war with five minerals scarce enough to be regarded as strategic; we emerged from it with the list expanded to fifty. Nevertheless, the Geological Survey got less than it requested to search for new mineral deposits. The Bureau of Mines was forced to curtail its research on synthetic liquid fuels and its metallurgical research, which is concerned, among other things, with discovering means of using our low-grade mineral deposits commercially.

The budget of the National Park Service for administration, maintenance and protection, was trimmed by $1.5 million, although the staff of the service was below prewar levels, and the number of visitors at our national parks is higher than before the war, and increasing each year. Congress appropriated approximately the same amount as last year, $32 million, for health, education and other service activities for Indians—and then, to effect a saving of $3 million, jeopardized the efficient administration of those funds by slashing the staff of the Bureau of Indian Affairs by nearly 50 per cent. The allocation for timber management and fire prevention in Alaska, where 98 per cent of the land is still part of the public domain, was cut to $90,000. Unfortunately, one fire has already occurred, devastating 300,000 acres and nullifying this particular economy.

V

Congress cut the operating budget of the Treasury by $60 million. The original House cut amounted to $80 million, but Secretary Snyder protested all but $10 million of these slashes, and Congress in its lenience made a small restoration.

Twenty million dollars of Treasury's appropriation cut was imposed on the Bureau of Internal Revenue. The service operations of the Bureau cannot easily be curtailed: tax blanks must be printed and distributed; taxpayers requesting help must be given it; returns must be recorded and funds deposited. It was repeatedly explained to Congress that because of this situation any cuts in the Bureau's

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budget would have to be borne almost entirely by its Enforcement Division, where each dollar of expenditure is productive of about $20 of additional revenue. It was explained, too, that the present budget of the Bureau permits it to audit only three tax returns out of every hundred, and that any reduction in this percentage would be an invitation to increased tax evasion. Nevertheless, Congress proceeded to trade a $20 million cut in appropriations against a prospective $400 million loss in revenue. Probably this action, as much as any other, prompted one Washington wag to observe, "This Congress is determined to economize, no matter how much it costs."

The budget of another important Treasury unit, the Coast Guard, was cut by $26 million. Since the reduction will affect only its "blue water" activities, which take place many miles from America's shores, it is not likely to receive wide notice. But the reduction is as dubious as are some of the economies which strike closer to home. So long as it stands, it will make it impossible for the United States to fulfill an international agreement to establish and maintain six additional ocean weather stations. However, Congress has instructed the Coast Guard to seek legislation which would specifically authorize this activity, and then renew its request for an appropriation, and such legislation has now been introduced. While it may not be passed in time to affect the 1948 budget, it will probably be passed eventually. It is unbelievable that we would want to save at the price of welching on an international commitment.

Congress cut the Bureau of Customs appropriation by $3 million, and this cut may lead to some real savings. To keep within its curtailed budget, the Bureau is eliminating its Canadian border patrol, and officials will privately concede that little harm will come from this. The Bureau had intended to eliminate the patrol sometime within the coming year, shifting some staff members to ports where additional personnel is needed, and using others to establish sorely needed new ports and airports of entry. Now the Bureau will have to seek specific authorization for staff for these purposes, as is proper. Unfortunately, this one relatively painless adjustment took care of only a fraction of the $3 million cut. The Bureau also had to thin its barely adequate staff of port control officers, who are used to combat petty smuggling.

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Having cut the bureaus which guard the nation against tax evasion and smuggling, Congress also cut the budget of the Secret Service, which provides protection against counterfeiting and other frauds in connection with government bonds and checks. Since the amount of currency in circulation has increased almost fourfold as compared with the prewar period, and the volume of government checks and bonds has jumped even more sharply, the Secret Service does not want for work. With the staff at its disposal last year, despite a great deal of uncompensated overtime, its backlog of pending investigations was increasing at the rate of some 350 cases per month. Yet Congress saw fit to reduce its appropriation.

VI

Nothing said in this article is meant to suggest that the 1948 budget as presented was a model of perfection. The budget, for any year, simply represents, in pecuniary terms, our willingness and ability to deal with our problems and responsibilities intelligently. We have obviously achieved something less than ultimate wisdom as a people when we have to devote so large a proportion of our resources as the 1948 budget required for past or future wars. Careful scrutiny of any given category of expenditures would doubtless reveal some degree of failure in thinking our problems through. It may be true, for example, as some astute observers maintain, that, even given the present state of the world, we could probably reduce expenditures for national defense if we could develop a coherent and completely forward-looking defense theory; we are probably wasting some money preparing for the last war.

A Congressional budget review which took the form of a basic reexamination of the responsibilities and activities of the Federal Government might produce economies and yield other important benefits. But the economy drive conducted by the first session of the Eightieth Congress was a different, and shoddy, type of performance. Even if we appraise it simply in dollars-and-cents terms, its accomplishments do not stand up. Some of its phony economies may cost us good money; if there is any delay in passing deficiency appropriations for tax refunds and similar purposes, unsettled cases will have to be laid aside until a definite date to which interest may

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be computed is known—and interest at six per cent paid for a longer period. And, by and large, the bona fide cuts in expenditures will not bear scrutiny. Economies which delay the completion of wealth-producing projects, reduce government revenue, and weaken our defenses against counterfeiting and other crimes are a dear purchase. The Republicans may have begun the economy drive in the sincere belief that they could find many opportunities for cutting expenditures without crippling essential services. But as they proceeded and became more and more desperate about their inability to live up to their claims, it is clear that they did not hesitate to cut agencies in the face of convincing evidence that they were already inadequately staffed.

Many of the indirect consequences of the economy drive were also extremely injurious. One perhaps had to observe it at firsthand to appreciate its disrupting effect upon the day-to-day operations of the Government. For many months before and during appropriation hearings, caution prevailed everywhere. Valuable projects and even appointments were held up: the Government proceeded at half speed.

During the hearings, the energies not only of the top administrators who testified but of many key assistants were diverted, for months on end, from substantive activities to explaining and defending agency plans. In a democracy it is desirable that each government agency justify its appropriation request before the legislature. But it does not follow that witnesses should be browbeaten, compelled to repeat explanations endlessly, and asked to supply more supporting data than it is possible for Congress to absorb. (The House hearings on Interior run to 3,736 pages.)

The demoralizing effect the economy drive had on government workers can perhaps be surmised. The fate of many agencies was still in doubt several weeks after the new fiscal year had begun. Some agencies, taking nothing for granted, laid off more workers than their final appropriation required, then recalled some. Others, gambling on a larger restoration of funds by the Senate than actually materialized, had to make extremely sharp personnel reductions because they had maintained staff for the first month of the year. Whichever way their agencies played it, many federal workers

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didn't know from day to day whether or not they had jobs. It is not to be wondered at if they were unable to devote their full attention to their work.

Many of the able people attracted to Washington during the war or New Deal period have decided that there is no use putting up with this sort of thing, and have departed. What is surprising is the extent to which the ranks have been closed by a corps of devoted civil servants, who are attracted by the scope and complexity of government operation, and are able to take the annual inquisitions of Congress in their stride. Our government has by no means fallen into the hands of unintelligent drones, but it is unrealistic to suppose that the castigations of Congress do not have some effect. In addition to driving many courageous and imaginative people from Washington, they make public service less attractive to up-and-coming young men in business and the professions.

President Truman sometimes comments, a little wistfully, about the difficulty of attracting good men to Washington. Congress' treatment of federal employees probably has even more effect on the sort of people whom it would be to the nation's advantage to attract to important staff jobs in the Government than it does on the relatively few considered for positions subject to presidential appointment. There always seems to be *someone* on Wall Street willing to have a brief fling at an Assistant Secretaryship.

The Government of the United States—which, despite the violent talk of some congressmen, is really a friendly power—has emerged from the economy drive weakened and, what is at least equally regrettable, damaged in prestige. The image of Uncle Sam as a profligate old no-account, on whom we had better keep a wary eye, has been spread more widely and etched more deeply upon our minds. The controversy over just how much the Republicans have saved has probably increased the tendency of many Americans to think of their government, not in terms of what it does and could do for them, but in terms of what it costs. This may prove to be the most disastrous of all the effects of the economy drive. The world does not grow less complex and, whatever our stereotypes, we may have to utilize our federal government increasingly for the problems the future holds.

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Justification By Numbers

A Commentary on the Kinsey Report

Geoffrey Gorer

FOR THE social scientist, a best seller is always an interesting and provocative phenomenon: what is it, he asks himself, that has made this book or play so much more acceptable to the reading public in this society at this period than the other books or plays produced at the same time? If this question can be satisfactorily answered, it invariably gives insight into the hidden wishes and fantasies of the book-reading public, and so throws light on the psychological dynamics of the society which has accepted the best seller. Even though the conscious promotion of best sellers has been very highly developed in recent years in the United States (witness the case of Nancy Bruff), a best seller cannot be established unless there is some congruence between its underlying material and the underlying wishes and fantasies of the purchasing public.

This year has witnessed an unparalleled phenomenon in publishing history: a dull and turgid scientific book, full of figures and tables, and published at a relatively very high price, has been selling at a rate paralleling such simple fantasies as *Gone With The Wind* or *Forever Amber*. The miscalled *Sexual Behavior In The Human Male*, by Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin, is firmly established in the best-seller lists. It has been the subject of numerous articles and innumerable conversations; to parallel the immediate impact of a scientific book, one would probably have to go back to 1859, and the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species;* and even then the sales were not comparable. Of course the social penetration of this book,

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and indeed of any book, should not be exaggerated; even if it sells a million copies, and each copy is looked at by five people—a generous estimate—it will have reached only three per cent of the American population; but even this is remarkable diffusion, and calls for comment and an attempt at explanation.

The pre-publication publicity campaign, with vetted articles strategically placed, was one of the most ingenious and carefully executed in recent publishing history; and undoubtedly a certain number of purchasers bought the book in the hope of pornographic titillation. But if this had been its main drawing power, its sales would have quickly dropped, for few texts dealing with such a subject could be less stimulating. Nor, in such a case, would it have received the long and solemn digests, in lieu of reviews or criticisms, which appeared in most of the public press.

I do not intend here to criticize the book from a scientific point of view. Competent specialists have pointed out, or will point out, the unsatisfactory nature of the sample on which Dr. Kinsey bases his generalizations; the dubious practice of treating memories of sexual behavior many years ago as absolutely veridic, when no law court will accept unsupported testimony of any event in the distant past; the ignoring of the accumulated psychiatric knowledge of the last fifty years on sexual behavior, and the (surely willful) distortion of the theories and viewpoints of psychiatry. If this book had only been bought by specialists competent to criticize it, its impact as a social phenomenon would have been minute; but the vast mass of the readers, like the reviewers, accept the material uncritically, so that it is true for them. On this basis, what can one deduce about the attitudes and expectations of college-educated urban Americans (far and away the largest component in Dr. Kinsey's sample, and almost certainly also in his customers) from the contents of the book, its reception in the popular press, and its echoes in conversation?

The chief novelty in the material, and the aspect which has been most consistently stressed, is the demonstration that certain types of sexual behavior are more widely practiced than had hitherto been supposed. That is all. No moderately sophisticated person can have been unaware that such practices existed; Dr. Kinsey has provided figures of distribution.

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Why then has such a pother been made about these figures of distribution? Why have reviewers stated, in various synonyms, that the book contains "potential dynamite"? Why have there been numerous suggestions that, in the light of these "disclosures," the laws meant to regulate sexual behavior and the instructions and admonitions given to young people will all have to be changed?

I suggest that this springs from what is in some ways the fundamental democratic fallacy, which may be called Justification by Numbers. If a few people do or think something, it may be wrong; but if a lot of people do or think it, then it is obviously right. This argument underlies a great deal of American advertising: to state that the brand you are marketing is the "most popular brand" or "sells more than double its nearest competitor" is to suggest forcibly that it is therefore better. On the political level the votes of the majority should undoubtedly be decisive on those issues on which they are called upon to vote (and these are remarkably few); but to extend this principle to moral, psychological or physiological activities is completely illogical.

An illustration may make this clearer. A colleague of Dr. Kinsey conducts a survey in Germany entitled *Eating Behavior in the Human Male* and finds that, say, 80 per cent of the sample has a calory "intake" of 1500 units daily, that 73 per cent only have two dietetic "intakes" daily, and so on and so forth; in the light of his "disclosures" it will become clear that 1500 calories daily divided into two meals is "normal" eating behavior, and that all our views on dietetics and nourishment have to be revised.

Most people would reject this as obvious nonsense, for we have scientifically determined standards of adequate nourishment, which have nothing to do with temporary and local practices; but the arguments are as valid in the one case as the other. The scientific determination of adequate and satisfying sexual behavior is by no means so well established or agreed upon (for, despite Dr. Kinsey, the implications of sex are much more complicated), but they will not be determined by a study of distribution. Dr. Kinsey's figures *can* be interpreted to mean that neurotic disturbances in sexual life in the contemporary United States are as widespread as malnutrition in contemporary Germany.

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I do not mean to suggest by this that it would not be highly desirable to change or modify the laws of the various states which are meant to control sexual behavior; but an unjust law does not change in injustice if it potentially affects 30 per cent of the population instead of 3 per cent. At most it makes the savage punishment of those who are convicted even more arbitrary than it had appeared before.

A second important aspect of this book is what might be called the "atomization" of sex. Until Dr. Kinsey came along, sex had generally been viewed as one of the most complex of all human activities, involving not merely the genital organs, but all the psychological and emotional components of the personality, both conscious and unconscious. But with Dr. Kinsey, everything except overt genital behavior has been omitted; sex has been reduced to statistics.

This atomization is in congruence with one of the major trends in contemporary American culture. The triumphs of mass production have been produced by the calculated atomization of the manufacturing process and of the worker's movements. The atomization of knowledge into a series of discrete and equal facts can be seen from the intelligence tests administered to pre-school moppets to the check lists which in many colleges constitute the chief examination before proceeding to graduate studies; from the "quiz" shows to the crossword puzzle; from teaching temporary officers new techniques, to public opinion polls. Now sex has been added to the list.

By thus oversimplifying or atomizing sex, it is possible to indulge in this domain too in the popular and widespread American habit of rating oneself. One of the chief recurring motives throughout American life from infancy to old age is the striving for relative success with one's equals and near-equals: precocity, marks or grades at school, athletic success, relative income, popularity—the list could be indefinitely prolonged. This "self-rating" has become so emotionally important for so many Americans that the greater number of popular papers have scoring cards by which one can rate oneself for knowledge or for the possession of certain qualities (20 to 16, excellent; 15 to 11, good; 10 to 6, average; under 6, poor). Now Dr. Kinsey has supplied a great number of tables by which one can rate oneself; and, in an appendix, has thoughtfully broken them down by age, educa-

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tion, marital status, etc. With a little trouble one can find out how one stacks up in frequency of "outlet," variety of "outlet," and even more intimate anatomical details, with one's peers. "Keeping up with the Joneses" acquires a new, and perhaps slightly ribald, significance.

As in all such "self-rating" tables, admiration goes to the high scores. Behind the mask of dispassionateness, one can easily discern Dr. Kinsey's astonished admiration for the people with the larger rates of "outlet," and his contemptuous pity for those making poor scores. A little anthropological knowledge might have rectified this attitude. We have enough information from enough primitive societies to suggest that there is an (apparently) direct correlation between high rates of intercourse and lack of emotional interest in sex or belief in love; the Lepchas from the borders of Tibet, whom I studied, had rates of outlet in their early adult life which would make Dr. Kinsey's high scorers look like pikers. For the Lepchas, sex was a satisfaction no more important than food; they did not believe in love, made no allowances for it, and the exclusive possession of a spouse was legally impossible. As a matter of fact, Dr. Kinsey probably already had the evidence to confirm this; among his highest scorers are his ubiquitous male prostitutes (p. 216)—a group which surely figures rather more importantly in Dr. Kinsey's sample than in the population at large. To equal the performances of such people is perhaps not wholly enviable.

It may be remarked that these "self-rating" tables are liable to produce more disquietude than satisfaction in the people who consult them. Forty-nine per cent of the population is always below the median. People so unsure of themselves as to need support from "self-rating" are not too likely to get it. On the other hand, judging by previous experience, people who are disturbed about their "deviance" will not get psychological comfort for more than a very few days from the tabular demonstration that their deviations are more widespread than they had suspected.

A probable by-product of these rating scales may well be further ammunition for the anti-intellectualism which is already widespread. In comic books and cartoons, professors are always "long-haired," and scientists are always "mad"; now Dr. Kinsey brings evidence to show that, compared with the less educated, they are less "manly,"

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"make" fewer girls, and sleep less often with their wives than do the men who leave school as soon as it is legally possible. The implications are obvious.

To parody a phrase of Marxist dialectics, Dr. Kinsey's tables result in the devaluation of all values. An involuntary nocturnal emission, a little boy sliding down a rope, a murderous rape, or Romeo spending the night with Juliet, Damon with Pythias, Paolo with Francesca, are all equated as one "outlet"; physiological itch, lust and love are reduced to their lowest common denominator, and it couldn't well be lower. Just as the dollar which may save oneself or one's family from starvation is no different from the dollar added to the billionaire's bank deposit, so in Dr. Kinsey's treatment all sexual "outlets" are reduced to a dead level of physiological spasm. Like dollars, the more you have the better. Chastity, even though it be Abelard's, results in a low score; and who wants to rate low?

Inspection of the tables suggests a couple of further generalizations about the men whom Dr. Kinsey interviewed. They do not easily tolerate physiological discomfort, and will get rid of it some way or other. Just as there is in the United States very low tolerance of even mild hunger or thirst or cold—as witnessed by the corner drugstore, the numerous drinking fountains, the central heating—so relatively mild gonadal pressure will be relieved somehow, almost as a health measure.

Secondly, despite the devaluation of all values, people are seeking for a greater level of satisfaction in sex than can generally be achieved. This I think is the explanation for much of the premarital, extramarital and occasional homosexual behavior which Dr. Kinsey demonstrates. Some of these excursions may be due to the search for a "good time" under the influence of alcohol, some to adolescent experimentation; but much would seem to be due to the seeking for an unattainable ideal.

I should be unhappy if it were deduced from this article that I am opposed to the scientific investigation of sexual behavior; on the contrary, I think it is one of the most important gaps in our knowledge of contemporary society which, when filled, may do much to remedy the disquietudes and restlessness of this Age of Anxiety. But it needs a more integrated approach than that of an entomologist; an act

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which can consummate love and produce children cannot be measured with the calipers that determine the variation in the wingspan of wasps. For a society which believes in love, be it sacred or profane, the physiological aspect of sex cannot be separated from its emotional and psychological concomitants without reducing it to meaninglessness. We need statistical studies of human sexual behavior, but they should be studies of the behavior of human beings, not of genital organs.

To revert to the original query of why the Kinsey report has had so widespread and ready an acceptance in the United States today, I think the answer can be found on two levels. It does not contain a single novel or disturbing idea, no new insight into human behavior, such as caused the initial rejection of such pioneers as Havelock Ellis or Sigmund Freud; and its underlying attitudes are in complete congruence with some of the predominant, though not necessarily the most valuable, attitudes and ideas of contemporary, educated, urban Americans. To the extent that Justification by Numbers is a valid concept, the phenomenal sales of Dr. Kinsey's book demonstrate that he has provided what his public wanted.

In the Autumn Number . . .

Another article on the Kinsey Report, replying to Mr. Gorer, will appear.

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The Stranger on the Mountain

Dorothy Berry Hughes

He who has shoes the color of the road,
Whose flesh keeps yet the marble of high thaw,
Conveys the mountain uninterpreted,
The traveler, easily remembering rocks,
Earth and the dripping stone. He fearfully saw
The shape of wind in the bare birch and the pine,
Marveling how the peak, bitter and green,
Wearing winter and flowers together, mocks
The season with its mad spring paradox.

Also the brooks, the mountain waters splintered
And shaken out over the slope, crow's cry,
The panic of the woodchuck lately wintered
On hill silence and hill hunger—these things
Are manifest—the farm's integrity,
The clamorous barn, and any vagrant knows
Which hollow holds the village of repose,
Profound and sweet, to which the red path brings
In its course innumerable wanderings.

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But who declares the mountain, must have hands
To tear harvest from hill, instinct to cherish
Hope in the churlish stove; he understands
Distance: the monstrous mile and the sick child;
That preponderant weight under which perish
Strength and the dream, the idiot's monolith;
The Sunday mountain with its choirs of faith.
Who seeks the ironic mountain chronicled
Finds her nameless, incongruous and wild.

•The poems of DOROTHY BERRY HUGHES have been published in *Poetry, Voices, Poetry Chapbook, Spirit, Tomorrow,* the New York *Herald Tribune* and THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

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Jane Austen, Karl Marx, and the Aristocratic Dance

David Daiches

MOST OF US read Jane Austen today for "escape," absorbing ourselves in the pages of *Pride and Prejudice* or *Emma* in order to forget the clamorous disorders of the world we live in, and to move for a brief period in a more confined and more assured society. We are presented with such delightfully insignificant problems: Who really gave Jane Fairfax the pianoforte? Will Mr. Bingley come back and marry Jane? When will Frank Churchill come and visit his stepmother? Everywhere there is decorum, social propriety, gentility maintaining itself against the inroads of vulgar tradespeople, and, winding through the whole, the perpetual quest for eligible marriage. Yet how ruthless is the clarity with which Jane Austen observes and records the economic realities underlying this graceful social dance! In a society where wealth came mostly from landed property (or manifested itself in the acquisition of landed property) which decended through the male heir, the fate of well-brought-up woman was to find a suitable husband or retire forever into the outer darkness. Mr. Bennett had to marry off all his daughters or have them face one of the most dreary of all existences—that of gentility without money. The specter of the shabby-genteel spinster haunts all of Jane Austen's novels.

In fact, if we read Jane Austen carefully enough, we find that she is not an "escapist" novelist at all: she is the most realistic novelist of her age, and the only English novelist of stature who was in a sense a Marxist before Marx. She exposes the economic basis of social behavior with an ironic smile that is much more effective than the pas-

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sionate outbursts of the propagandists. There is an iron delicacy about her presentation of social life that is both amusing and disturbing. Think of Charlotte Lucas in *Pride and Prejudice*, deliberately accepting the hand of a man she despises—the egregious Mr. Collins, a complacent fool of the most impossible kind—because she knows that if she does not close with that offer she will never get another, and the fate in store for her as an unmoneyed spinster in a genteel society is too tragic to contemplate. Critics have remarked that there is no real delineation of true love in Jane Austen, and that is true enough, for Miss Austen knew only too well that in that kind of society genteel young ladies cannot afford true love: their objective must be marriage, and marriage with someone *eligible*. In Jane Austen, only the poor can afford passion.

Her novels are usually described as social comedies, but the fact is that some of them come close to tragedy, though Miss Austen quickly retreats from the brink of the pit to which she has so gracefully led us. We are not allowed to consider Charlotte Lucas' plight too curiously. In *Emma*, Jane Fairfax is saved from what she herself calls the "white slave market" (which sells off impoverished gentlewomen as governesses) by her marriage to Frank Churchill. But her possible fate remains a potentially tragic element in the background, and the remarkably bitter outburst in which it is described casts a curious light over the "social comedy."

Or consider the relations between Mr. and Mrs. Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice*. Mrs. Bennett had captured her man early, and assured herself of a proper context for her gentility. (She is not, it is true, as genteel as she might be—but that only means that she has a tendency to tell the truth about the economic objectives pursued by members of her class.) She had successfully fooled Mr. Bennett when she was young enough for her beauty to outweigh her silliness, and Mr. Bennett spent the rest of his life regretting it. It had clearly been no genuine love match, but a match between cool self-interest and male susceptibility. And silly though she is, Mrs. Bennett is realistic enough to know that by hook or by crook her daughters must be properly married off before their looks begin to fade. A genteel upbringing is impossible equipment for life unless you secure a wealthy husband. How much more necessary is marriage to

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the Bennett girls than to their servants! The pathetic Miss Bates of *Emma* remains an awful warning.

Yet the atmosphere of the novels does remain that of comedy. There is almost what might be called a ballet movement in many of them—or perhaps something between a ballet and a Mozart opera. The characters circle round each other with appropriate speeches and gestures, and occasionally a grotesque like Mr. Collins joins the dance as a symbol of one kind of fate that threatens the dancers. Jane Austen's world is a woman's world, and the male characters are simply symbols of the different fates in store for women.

It is a stately dance on the lawn—but all around there are the dark trees, the shadows. And if you do not dance well, if you have not been able, by the end of the day, to secure a permanent partner with whom to walk off the lawn, you are left, when the sun sets, alone amid the shadows. We are never allowed to forget that possibility, never allowed to forget what a serious business this dancing is. One false step can be fatal. One must keep one's equilibrium on a razor's edge, with the fate of Charlotte Lucas and Miss Bates (to say nothing of that which almost overtook Lydia Bennett) waiting on either side. Jane Fairfax's bitter remark about the white slave market in London was not introduced simply to make conversation.

The dance of life: the idea is a common one in literature. Dr. Tillyard, in his book on Shakespeare's history plays, reminds us that it was an idea not unfamiliar to Shakespeare and very attractive to Milton. That strange work, *Orchestra, or a Poeme on Dancing*, written by Sir John Davies at the end of the sixteenth century, gives a fascinating picture of the whole cosmic order as one vast dance. Penelope, in the absence of her wandering husband, Ulysses, is invited by Antinous, the noblest of her numerous suitors, to dance, and, on her refusal, Antinous breaks into an account of dancing as the activity which makes the world go round:

> Dancing, bright lady, then began to be
> When the first seeds whereof the world did spring,
> The fire, air, earth, and water did agree
> By Love's persuasion, nature's mighty king,
> To leave their first disordered combating,
> And in a dance such measure to observe
> As all the world such motion should preserve.

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Penelope's continued refusal leads Antinous into ever more eloquent pictures of the dancing universe:

> But why relate I every singular?
> Since all the world's great fortunes and affairs
> Forward and backward rapt and whirled are,
> According to the music of the spheres;
> And Chance herself her nimble feet upbears
> On a round slippery wheel, that rolleth aye,
> And turns all states with her impetuous sway;
>
> Learn then to dance, you that are princes born,
> And lawful lords of earthly creatures all,
> Imitate them, and thereof take no scorn,
> For this new art to them is natural.
> And imitate the stars celestial;
> For when pale death your vital twist shall sever,
> Your better parts must dance with them forever.

Davies finally has Antinous present a prophetic picture of Queen Elizabeth, sitting like the bright moon in majesty, while the stars, her courtiers, dance around her. The favorite medieval *motif* was the Dance of Death, but the Renaissance brought in from classical sources the Dance of Life.

The ballet movement of Jane Austen's novels is thus in an impressive European tradition, though not obviously or explicitly in that tradition. Miss Austen, who never indulges in flights of fancy, suggests the dance *motif* partly by the way she organizes the characters and events in her novels, and partly by making the description of an actual ball a central part of many of her novels. The conventions of the ball are the conventions of daily social life somewhat more formalized:

> O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
> How can we know the dancer from the dance?

So wrote W. B. Yeats, another writer who saw life as adequately symbolized by the dance. He uses that image again and again—"men dance on deathless feet"; "though some said she played, I said that she had danced heart's truth"; "come out of charity and dance with me in Ireland." Or consider the significance of such titles as *Michael*

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Robartes and the Dancer and *The Dancer at Cruachan and Cro-Patrick*. The dance for Yeats was the symbol of that ultimate activity in which all the contradictions of life and death were resolved: it had a more profound but less tragic meaning than Jane Austen's dance of life, where the dancer was more like the victim bitten by the poisonous spider who had to dance the *tarantella* to expell the poison from his body, and must keep on dancing wildly until he was cured. Jane Austen's dance was sedate, not wild; but the dancers were under a similar compulsion.

The best fate in store for a Jane Austen heroine was to marry a landed gentleman of wealth, intelligence and goodness of heart, considerably older than herself, with a contempt for frivolity and a stability of character that made him absolutely dependable. If this symbol of woman's ideal fate also included a modicum of pride—for Mr. D'Arcy was undoubtedly proud, and Mr. Knightley had more than a touch of the same quality—it served to emphasize the essentially aristocratic nature of Jane Austen's most eligible male types. To achieve the truly civilized life, Miss Austen seemed to be implying, you must be completely free from economic cares and be in a position to enjoy fully the arts and sciences, build up a first-class library and experiment in new farming methods, appreciate music, speculate on new philosophical theories, and perhaps even make some sort of amateur (but sound) contribution of your own—and do all this in perfect peace of mind.

And this brings us to another link between Jane Austen and W. B. Yeats: both believed in what might be called the "country house ideal." Yeats refers again and again, both in his poetry and in his prose, to that aristocratic combination of leisure, dignity, ease and intelligence which, he held, constituted the best environment for art and indeed for all civilized activity:

> How but in custom and in ceremony
> Are innocence and beauty born?

It must be confessed that there is something very attractive about the country house ideal: Shakespeare certainly found it so, and many a sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English poet shared his view. The famous Countess of Pembroke—"Sidney's sister, Pem-

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broke's mother"—provided a notable example of what the aristocratic life could achieve both in the way of encouraging and assisting poets (Spenser and Ben Jonson were among the many helped by her) and in producing original work as well. Of course, in a certain stage of society, patronage was the only way by which art could be encouraged and the artist maintained, but the country house ideal does not owe its attractiveness simply to the fact that it represented one system of supporting artists. If we consider the best type of English landed gentry—D'Arcy of *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, though without D'Arcy's rather offensive snobbery—we find that here is a way of living that, considered in itself, offers just about everything civilized man could wish. Courtesy, graciousness, ease, dominate every aspect of daily living. There is time to cultivate the mind and appreciate the arts; the splendid library is for use as well as ornament, the family play musical instruments and also listen discriminatingly to the playing of experts (whom their patronage helps to support); intellectual curiosity and aesthetic sensibility have every means of satisfying themselves; conversation is witty, thoughtful, polite. In short, it is, ideally (though not always as Jane Austen describes it), the kind of life in which man can employ all his faculties to the full, and not have to sacrifice some to others.

Yet few thoughtful people today would accept the country house ideal as worth striving after. This is partly because the ideal has been all too seldom realized in practice, and its corruption is peculiarly offensive just because *corruptio optimi pessima*—the corruption of the best becomes the worst. But there is a more important reason for our distaste for Mr. D'Arcy and what he stands for. However fine a life he might be able to lead himself, it was at tremendous cost to society as a whole. He represented the apex of a pyramid, and he flourished at the top of a social hierarchy which existed in order to maintain him. In other words, though the country house ideal represents a fine way of living, it has proved so far a socially wasteful way of achieving a good ideal for a very few. D'Arcy could never have lived as he did without the existence of a large, permanent servant class. Consider the number of servants, retainers and other permanently depressed persons necessary to keep only one upper middle

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class family going in nineteenth-century England. Emma Woodhouse, a perfectly able-bodied young woman living alone with her father, had a large domestic staff to work for her. She had a personal maid of her own, and there were a butler and a coachman, as well as other unnamed domestics. We rebel against the country house ideal, not because it is itself unattractive, but because it has always proved too socially expensive. And many people—particularly Americans—confuse ends and means, and because they have a very proper objection to the cost of the ideal they decry the ideal itself. (People talk about "the right to work" when they mean, or ought to mean, the right to leisure, or at least the right to the economic security which alone can provide leisure.)

It is, however, a fact that up till now truly civilized man has only been produced at tremendous social cost. The Cavaliers of the seventeenth century who, politically speaking, were on the reactionary side in the English Civil War, were nevertheless to a large extent (and with the very important exception of Milton) the guardians of the arts and sciences. In an age when the arts, apart from the drama, could only flourish if fostered by a leisured class, this was bound to be so. Speaking personally, I should have been politically with Cromwell (though not as far as his Irish policy went!) but aesthetically with Charles I—and with Charles II. All progressive political movements are bound to be in some degree puritanical: they have immediate practical ends in view which cannot but make them suspicious for the time being of any free play of the human spirit—even though their ultimate objective may be to make possible that free play of the human spirit to a much wider group of people. This is one of the paradoxes of art and politics.

To live by ideas and not by prejudices, to be able to indulge freely all one's intellectual and artistic aptitudes, to conduct one's daily living with ease, tolerance, intelligence and curiosity—this surely is a highly civilized ideal, and so far this has been achieved only by a few people living mostly under some form of the "country house system." So long as human labor is necessary to provide the base of the pyramid of which this kind of living is the apex, such an ideal must be confined to the few. But as soon as it becomes possible to substitute technological for human effort—as soon as man has

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learned to harness such forces as electricity (to say nothing of atomic power) instead of simple manpower—it becomes for the first time possible to develop a country house system for all.

Our ideal should be for every man to be able to live at the apex of the pyramid, and we have the technological resources to realize that ideal if we really wish it. The political problem then becomes the problem of finding and realizing the social organization which would admit of such an ideal being achieved by technological means. And of course, "human nature being what it is," the political problem is in fact the most difficult to solve. So I call myself an aristocratic socialist, meaning that I realize the necessity of some kind of political socialism if every man is to have (if only figuratively) his own country house.

There was nothing fundamentally wrong with Jane Austen's heroes or with Yeats's landed aristocracy except their social cost. Though the ideal has often been debauched, it remains a valid ideal, and our problem is to achieve it with less human waste—in other words, more democratically. Athenian democracy was made possible by the slave society which supported it. That does not mean that the Athenian democratic ideal was in itself unworthy, but it does mean that at that stage of history it could not be achieved except at that price. Jefferson was a Virginian gentleman who represented an aspect of the English country house ideal transplanted to America—in a sense, the fine flower of English aristocratic culture—and there is much in American democratic thought which owes its origin to the free and humanistic speculation made possible by a tradition which was itself made possible by aristocracy. We know now that political ideals are inseparable from economic organization, and that agreeable social behavior cannot be divorced from the pyramid of which it is the apex. Jane Austen saw this before Karl Marx, but as she was concerned to depict only that aspect of the truth which she knew from personal experience, and as she communicated her insights with a delicacy free from the generalizations of the historian and the wrath of the prophet, she does not usually get credit for her perception. Which is probably just as well, for otherwise her works would long since have been analyzed to death by the remorseless armies of sociological critics.

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Planning and Freedom in A Democracy

Bryn J. Hovde

AMERICANS are devoted to democracy, and tend now to find its essence in private property and free enterprise. Actually, its essence lies in civil liberties and the public welfare. All the world, including the United States, is in the midst of a social revolution considerably antedating, and likely to continue far beyond, the present day. Neither the end nor the product of this immense historic movement can be accurately foretold. Only this is certain: every people must bring to it the best that it has and the best that it has thought; and every people must be prepared to modify both its institutions and its philosophy in terms of world peace and human welfare.

The best that we Americans possess, aside from the natural resources with which we are endowed, is a pattern of rural and urban organization capable of producing the highest standard of material living in the world. The components of this pattern are mainly our free public education, an advanced scientific technology, ample resources of finance capital, and a courageous spirit of enterprise. The best that we have thought is embodied in the word *democracy*, which is the greatest degree of individual liberty compatible with the general welfare.

Since democracy is a dynamic, evolutionary concept, we have from the beginning of American history changed and enriched the

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meaning of both individual liberty and general welfare. Thus, for example, the constitutional convention in 1787 did not consider the individual's right to vote in federal elections an inalienable civil right, but as a matter for the states themselves to determine. Today we do hold it to be the sacred right of all, women as well as men. Furthermore, in the original constitution Negroes were granted no individual rights, and might indeed be held in slavery where the states themselves should so decree. Today federal law permits no distinction between Negro and white citizens.

Individual liberty means more now than ever before. But this increase in the degree and extent of personal freedom has subtracted nothing from our concept of the general welfare. On the contrary, we have greatly expanded it. Whereas in 1787 the obligation of government "to promote the general welfare" was conceived in the elementary terms of a pre-industrial, mainly rural economy, it is now held to embrace functions once thought to be those of the states alone, or wholly private—and even functions then unknown. The argument among us today concerning the alleged encroachment of government upon the traditional freedom of the individual in matters of property and business is far more an argument on the practice than on the theory of democracy. For in these matters the general welfare has always been primary, subject only to due process of law, whereas the civil rights of the individual are coordinate with the general welfare, and constitutionally beyond the power of legislation to diminish. In other words, democracy has remained true to itself in idea, but has changed in practice.

Today democracy confronts a social crisis both in America and abroad. It is in danger—first, because the recent wars have created conditions in which, to large parts of the world, the most material things in life have become supremely important; and second, because the mechanistic authoritarian alternative to democracy, inherent in all human society, presents itself as the swifter way to achieve these material necessities. Confronted with this situation, American democracy must make its contribution to the world-wide social revolution by doing everything in its power to promote the general human welfare, and by taking at home those steps that are necessary to prove it vital.

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There are many such steps that we need to take at home. On the assumption, so cardinal to democracy, that the perfection and extension of civil rights to *all* Americans will continue, we must devote ourselves to those measures that concern the physical environment in which Americans live, and that are necessary to assure all our people of economic security with the least sacrifice of freedom.

II

The development of urban culture constitutes an absolutely major revolution in the life of the human race in modern times, presenting problems that we have as yet almost completely failed to solve. With hundreds of thousands and even millions of people living and working together in areas of tremendous population density, we have long confronted conditions that are very critical to the evolution of a good life. These conditions have profound implications in terms of almost every aspect of our civilization. Not only modern cities, but rural regions and regions of natural resources depend heavily upon modern technology and require a degree of planning hitherto unknown. In the TVA and the Reclamation and Power Projects of the Department of the Interior, the United States had demonstrated as well as any country in the world what can be done to conserve natural resources and enrich human life through effective technical and social planning. But we are hardly out of the experimental stage.

In this broad area of planning, the problems of urbanism loom exceedingly large. Looking backward, one may confidently say that the basis of American democratic idealism has been rural and small-town. It was in the rural and small-town life of Colonial and Revolutionary America that American democratic idealism was developed. This life was characterized by an extreme private property concept in land and homes. Space and privacy were available to practically every family; they symbolized the rights and the dignity of the individual. By contrast, millions of the city denizens of today are lucky if they have a private toilet and bathroom. In this early America, the population was relatively homogeneous. There was close contact between individuals, and a high degree of direct democracy, as in the New England town meetings. Public problems and candidates for public office were familiar. The church, the market, the village

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square, and the schoolhouse constituted the focal points of an intimate cultural community. And though formerly education was far behind that of today in philosophy, equipment and extent, the members of the local community were much more vigorous in their thinking on public issues than the average city dweller of today, and people were kept well informed through local print shops and a vigorous local press.

The number of urban dwellers has been phenomenally increased, until today 56.5 per cent of the population lives in communities numbering 2,500 and over, and 28.8 per cent of the population lives in cities of 100,000 and over. In such urban communities, especially the larger ones, the private property concept has undergone a very great change without having been adjusted to the necessities of this kind of life. For example, there has occurred a tremendous decline in home ownership, so that only 44 per cent of the population own their own homes. Real estate, one may say, is not real any longer but speculative. And the speculative nature of the contemporary real estate has gone into American thinking as virtually a sacred civil right.

Industrialism has been developed as nowhere else in the world. Centering in large plants and in urban communities including many large plants, industry has attracted foreign immigration and contributed to break down the original homogeneity of the American population. New residential building has occurred on the peripheries of our cities, and the older areas have degenerated into slums.

In all of this, there has been a very sad lack of physical planning. Land coverage by buildings has been allowed until recently to rob urban communities of all vacant land, resulting in an excessive population density and unwholesome conditions. Architectural and aesthetic irresponsibility has been the rule rather than the exception, on the theory that everyone may do with his own what he wishes. The development of modern transport facilities, particularly the automobile, has created intolerable and hazardous traffic conditions, far worse in the cities than in the countryside, which is just the opposite of earlier conditions. Problems of sanitation have assumed critical importance. Racial, national and economic segregation and restrictive covenants have contributed to aggravate the problem of

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civil rights, and have split up and divided the population into conflicting groups.

All of this has resulted in the loss of the old basis for democracy and culture. Hence our urban politics are dominated by entrenched political machines characterized by an alarming development of the Führer principle and appeals to prejudice. What we call culture tends to become either exhibitionism or escapism, whether it be in the area of education, religion, art or recreation. As Erich Fromm has so brilliantly pointed out in his recent book, *Man for Himself*, ethics and character have in our cities become the victims of the market place ideology—so that individual worth is judged, not by intrinsic personal qualities, but by the principle of the exchangeability of parts. Personality has become an item of machinery, the virtue of which is to be exactly identical with other parts. Since individuals cannot be exactly alike, they must at least appear to be alike, thus reducing themselves as far as possible to a monotonous uniformity that cannot help but be false.

The urban problem of today is how to reconstruct our cities to make them democratically and culturally functional. In grappling with this problem, no small scale thinking will suffice. It is necessary to be bold and radical. For example, how large shall we permit cities to become? In England and Sweden they have arrived at some fairly definite conclusions. But no such decision has been made with respect to any American city. In large urban areas it would seem to be desirable to develop garden communities on a comprehensive, unified and functional basis, functional far beyond mere streets and sewers. Satellite towns are a real possibility, provided we surmount many of the traditional concepts imbedded in our public and constitutional law. Finally, the very hearts of our cities can be reorganized on the basis of relatively self-contained neighborhoods, each of which would recapture the most important characteristics of the smaller towns—the characteristics that afforded such a good basis for democracy in a younger America. We need to come to definite conclusions with respect to the desirable maximum density of population. We need to develop a firmer concept of what constitutes a good neighborhood. For example, is a good neighborhood one which is limited to white people of the same economic and social standing? Or is it

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one which accepts all American citizens as potential members, thus emphasizing democracy and cultural pluralism?

The very physical plant of our cities needs overhauling and reconstruction—particularly housing. But here we are confronted with such problems as the right of the public to plan and direct its own development, to assemble and dispose of land, as against the right of the individual to do with his land what he pleases. We are confronted with the problem of the extent to which such a basic necessity as housing for low-income families shall receive public support. This cuts to the heart of the question of the degree of public enterprise which may be accepted in a democratic society based upon the economic rights of the individual.

But if we adhere to the democratic social ideal of America in its simplest and clearest formulation, we shall arrive at a good solution. Unless we do, American and Western society will fail to purge itself of those tendencies which have lately grown so strong and which lead us imperceptibly but definitely to some form of authoritarianism.

III

In such an integrated, technical society as ours, the necessary part of government in urban planning, redevelopment and housing leads directly to a consideration of the American system of free enterprise. Of all American institutions this is undoubtedly the strongest, the most vigorous, and the most cherished. The right to acquire and to own property, and to dispose of it, is certainly one of the basic freedoms in American society. It has always been recognized that private property rights are necessarily limited by the public interest, yet we have been so zealous in our worship of free enterprise that the exercise of its rights and interest by the public has always seemed more of a potential evil than a potential good.

So great is the commitment of the American people to its own peculiar economic system that to many Americans the championship of free economic enterprise is all that matters in our disagreement with the Soviet Union and its ideology. Hence the clamor to deny loans and gifts to countries with ideologies and governments which tend in the direction of an increase in public control of business and an increase in public enterprise. Actually, the only legitimate cause

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of disagreement with the Soviets or with others is the degree to which civil rights and the right of other people to govern themselves are denied.

It is completely natural that dogmatic adherents to the system of free enterprise should find in any threat to that system the very nub of the social crisis. To them everything is lost if the system of free enterprise is lost, or even modified. But the social crisis is far more inherent in the operation of free enterprise itself than in most of the efforts to cope with its evils. The real danger to the system of free enterprise, and to society as we know it, lies in the failure of the system to provide full employment. We have a long history of such failure, and it is utopian to expect the full employment of the postwar years to continue indefinitely unless we plan for it. We have full employment today because there is an insatiable demand for goods at home and abroad.

The system of free enterprise is threatened by the danger of inflation, and by the booms and busts which have characterized the economic life based upon free enterprise. It is the domestic and world-wide turmoil inevitable in the bust that may follow the present boom, for which the Communist authoritarians are waiting. Their whole foreign policy, and indeed their domestic policy, is geared to this expectation. And the present inflation in America seems to them the inevitable precedent to such a bust. Hence, if we are unable to stop this inflation, we are headed directly into an economic and social catastrophe. This is the belief not only of the Soviets but of those competent economists who are trying to save the system of free enterprise. Stephen Raushenbush, in his article entitled "The Coming Wage-Price Spiral" in *Harpers Magazine*, January 1948 (page 3) puts it clearly:

> . . . a willingness to sit out this inflation without trying to stop it may, accidentally, quite without intent, turn out to be one of the most important and unfortunate foreign policy decisions that any great people has made in recent years.

The proponents of the system of free enterprise thus endanger it in a number of ways. For example, by their dog-in-the-manger attitude toward service of the public by government enterprise when

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necessary, as in power and utilities (not to mention the spectacular new sources of energy such as the atom, the sun, and supersonics), in housing and planning, and in their demands for subsidies to private undertakings without compensating responsibilities. They endanger it also when, by over-investment in "safe" securities and by creating a shortage of venture capital, they make a mockery of enterprise. They endanger it when they resist good and proper labor relations; when in the process of competition they create trusts and monopolies that eliminate small business; and when they fail to realize their responsibilities in foreign policy.

Free enterprise needs joint business, labor and government planning, both for immediate and long-term goals, including agreements on the distribution of production in terms of wages, taxes for social security and public services, and profits which are variable in terms of efficiency. In short, the system of private enterprise needs for its preservation a national economic budget within which to operate. It also needs a healthy development of consumers' and producers' cooperation which will stabilize a large part of the economy; and it needs finally a stouter system of business and social ethics.

There is no reason to believe that our problems will be solved by a plunge from an extreme system of private enterprise to an extreme system of public ownership. Indeed, the contrary may be expected, for in such a leap our social system would have to be supplanted by another. The problem is therefore that of discovering what is gold and what is dross in the system of private enterprise in its present form. It is a problem of adjustment and modification, and therefore of evolution. Only a democracy, conscious of its crisis, with full knowledge of what is involved both in objective and in technique, and with determination to succeed, can effect this evolution in the short allotted time.

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The Rise of Fantasy in Literature

Harrison Smith

THE increasing use of fantasy by modern writers of fiction, either as a means to an end, or solely for the sake of the story, is a significant symptom of the condition of our times. It deserves more general attention than it gets.

The Oxford Dictionary has a good deal of trouble in defining fantasy. It calls it "irregular or erratic fancy in thought or action; unrestrained imagination; whim; caprice; vagary." It is also "the forming of unreal, chimerical, or grotesque images in the mind; a mingling of incongruous or unfounded ideas or notions; disordered or distorted fancy; fantastic imagination; fantasia." None of these definitions accurately describes the major uses of fantasy in literature today, the use of macabre and gruesome ideas to horrify the reader, to make his flesh creep; or its more extensive use of the discoveries of science to place man in the future as the master of the universe or the destroyer of the world. On the one hand, it panders to ancient superstitions and fears, and on the other it projects man forward in time and space.

There are now five new publishing houses devoted to the publication of books of fantasy alone, and eighteen magazines bringing out stories which range from what may seem to be the products of deranged minds, to brilliant and diabolically clever extensions of anthropomorphic, philosophic and scientific conceits. Fantasy has become one of the major themes for the anthologist, and so abundant is the new material that there is less repetition of individual titles than you will find in any other form of anthology today. There must obviously be a reason for this enlargement of the scope of fantasy in literature, as well as for the demand for it by the public.

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In the first place, it would seem obvious that the rapid mechanization of American civilization and the increasing failure of religion to satisfy the emotional and imaginative needs of human beings has destroyed men's sense of security, their belief in an ordered world, and their hope for a reasonable continuance of sensation after death. Millions of people who are only a generation or two away from the soil have lost the beneficent influence of nature and the changing seasons. The tranquil beauties of plains and hills are seen and felt from rushing automobiles and trains, and from the sky, dimly, curiously flattened and insignificant. Among city dwellers the lack of conflict with storm and cold has left them bereft of the significance of man's age-long battle, and has diminished the natural development of their egos. With our increasing knowledge of the world and the universe, the charming and legendary paradises and heavens which were sufficient for human imaginings centuries ago have lost their appeal as the abode of billions of enfranchised souls. To vast numbers of people, their churches no longer offer emotional catharsis, mystery and beauty, but a system of rigid morality and ethics, which their observation of human conduct does not enable them to accept as an immutable and binding law. When the Christian conception of hell as a place of eternal retribution and torment lost its grip on the imagination, the vast drama of life and death that had satisfied Western man for almost two thousand centuries paled to insignificance. Heaven, with its gates of pearl and streets of gold, its ordered ranks of angels and cherubims, and hell's yawning chasms and hierarchy of demons, were naturally fantasies in themselves. They have been supplanted in the minds of countless beings during the last half-century by new fantasies, for in some way or other the human imagination seems driven to fill the vacuum.

It was not until the advent of the mechanical and scientific age that the new literature of scientific fantasy emerged. It was heralded by Jules Verne, who used the limited inventions of the nineteenth century to construct the submarine and to send men to the moon. Its greatest creative writer was H. G. Wells, who invented fleets of airplanes before man had made them, devised the rocket, and glimpsed radar and atomic energy.

Certainly most of us did not realize how deeply the accomplish-

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ments of science had impressed and bewildered people until, a few years ago, Orson Welles's fantastic broadcast of an invasion by Martians sent thousands of reasonable, sedate householders fleeing into the night from their homes in New Jersey and New York. To these frightened fugitives, it was as logical to assume that the enemy had come from Mars in space ships equipped with death rays, as that the Germans had landed with tanks and flamethrowers. As children and adolescents, they had become acquainted with Superman, and the hostile space ship was as much a reality to them as the latest news of mysteries that were about to emerge from the laboratories of science.

It is no wonder that man has become frightened for his life and the continuance of the human race. The incredible romances of the scientific fiction writers are becoming realities. For years before the atomic plants at Oak Ridge and Hanford were blueprinted, the exploding atom was a popular theme—for use in warfare, and as the power to drive industry and space ships headed for Venus or the remote stars. We had emerged too fast into a world of relativity, for which Einstein had laid the cornerstone; and relativity could be, and was, loosely interpreted to mean that nothing was what it had seemed to be. Popular books of astronomy told the reader that the universe was expanding, that there were as many suns in space as there were grains of sands on the world's seashore. The physicist proved that a grain of matter was in itself a solar system, that a solid rock actually contained "interstellar" space. The psychiatrist revealed that the human mind was unsubstantial, that apparently sane and solid citizens might be ridden by neuroses and on the verge of worse. Faced with other half-revealed terrors in the future—an atomic war that would destroy civilization, radioactive gases carried by the winds over continents, and bacteriological warfare—the age of invention rapidly became the age of anxiety, to borrow W. H. Auden's title, and certainly the age of fear.

The scientific fantasy story may, indeed, be explained as a necessary device. It has offered an imaginatively conceivable development into the future of everything menacing that science can invent. Some of its more horrible conceits, the monsters that hide within the earth or may descend upon us from the skies, seem to come from the borderland of madness; but even they are, in a way, a buffer against

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known and more conceivable terrors. They are not expected to be believed, as are the familiar trans-universe liners, or the space-suits that are now as familiar to fantasy readers as the sartorial products of Brooks Brothers. If you announce to an adolescent today that the latest model of the atomic bomb could destroy or poison most of New York, and that time bombs may be quietly dropped in harbors along our coastline to explode one fine day, he will not be startled or alarmed. He has read these stories long ago, and is far ahead of you. He is already dreaming of a space-ship and a suit in which he can walk on the surface of the moon while he calmly watches the earth blow up in fragments.

The modern development of fantasy has taken a twofold course —stemming, one might say, from Poe and Jules Verne. Other experts may or may not accept the dictum of John W. Campbell (editor of *Astounding Science-Fiction*), in his introduction to *The Best of Science Fiction*, published by Crown in 1946, that "as distinct from science fiction, fantasy embraces only 'the ghoulies and ghosties and things that go boomp i' the night.' " But it is certainly clear that the two main streams of fantastic literature have been the *scientific* and the *supernatural*.

The impact of the "new" scientific imagination and the startlingly rapid growth of scientific achievement have resulted in a body of scientific fantasy that largely consists of "extrapolations of known science into possible future engineering," to quote Mr. Campbell. But the really terrible speculations in which most of us indulge, however unwillingly, as a result of the new destructive agencies devised by scientists, have set off another force as well. Supernatural fantasy is one manifestation of this force—the will to escape from a too fantastic reality into horrors which, however gripping, do not threaten us as probable, or even possible. In this sense, then, the supernatural and the real have become the obverse and the reverse of the same monstrous shape. Sometimes the two forms merge; more often a particular writer pursues exclusively one or the other.

Today's fantasy story—both the scientific and the supernatural varieties—has developed, as did the modern detective story, from the pulp magazines. *Amazing Stories*, the earliest magazine devoted entirely to fantasy, was created by Hugo Gernsback in 1926, using

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the work of Wells, Verne and Blackwood, and earlier fiction in the public domain. Gradually a group of writers, many of them scientifically educated, began to create fantasy for this and other magazines. At first, the work of these young writers was crude and stiff. Science, not human nature, was the main theme. Their characters were wooden, their conversation devoted to the simplest words, or to scientific terms bewildering to everyone but their devotees. The "weird" and supernatural tales, however, became predominant, founded to some extent on the work of predecessors, and gradually surpassing it in unrestrained outpourings of fevered minds.

One of the most fluent and creative of these writers developed by *Amazing Stories* is H. P. Lovecraft, who wrote in the Gothic tradition of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and Ann Radcliff's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, with gloomy and poetic overtones from Edgar Allen Poe. Every anthology labeled "Horror" or "Supernatural" stories, or more imaginatively, *The Dark of the Moon*, includes some of the work of that almost mysterious night-wanderer whose macabre speculations emerged from a bedroom in Providence, Rhode Island. "The Rat in the Walls," the "Dunwich Horror," "The Whisperer in Darkness" are familiar tales of his.

Later writers in this field, graduates of the pulp magazines, who have had collections of their own work published, in addition to regular appearances in anthologies, are Fritz Leiber, Ray Bradbury, Carl Jacobi, M. R. James and August Derleth. Most of Lieber's tales are known as "modern horrors"—dealing with the terrors he has discovered in American cities, in contrast to the more familiar Gothic castles and haunted woods. Among Bradbury's grimmer stories in his collection, *Dark Carnival*, are lighter and curiously charming tales of a family who retire to their coffins in the cellar every night and drink blood when they can get it.

Some of the anthologies differentiate between the various classes of horror stories. In *Tales of the Undead*, Elinor Blaisdell, its editor, notes that the book is a find for the connoisseur, "because it comprises a special brand of high-voltage horror story: the story of the vampire and the undead—the earthly being which is neither ghost nor living." Here you can find Lovecraft, Wakefield, Derleth and James in odd juxtaposition with Edith Wharton, Gautier and F. Marion

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Crawford. As an introduction to more general literature of this nature, Random House's thousand-page anthology, *Great Tales of Terror and the Supernatural* is the most complete. Its formidable list of writers ranges from the new arrivals to E. F. Benson, Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling and Henry James.

The older writers are being assiduously collected in separate volumes and anthologies, including a few who have been literally dug up from the grave. The stories of J. Sheridan Le Fanu, an Irish writer and editor who died in 1875, have been revived for a far wider audience than his five novels of the supernatural and his many ghost stories won for him during his lifetime. M. R. James, whose ghosts are presumed to be the liveliest of our time, believes that Le Fanu belongs in the first rank; "nobody sets the scene better than he; nobody touches the effective detail more deftly." Le Fanu, like Lovecraft a century later, wrote in bed after midnight; both were visited by nightmares and haunted in their sleep, describing their spectral visitants on paper the next night, and both had a wide knowledge of sorcery and black magic.

The stories of A. E. Coppard, *Fearful Pleasures*, and Algernon Blackwood, *The Doll and One Other*, have recently appeared in new editions. Coppard, a cross between Saki and Lord Dunsany, combines whimsy with horror in a most engaging manner. His "Ahoy, Sailor Boy!" is one of the freshest in the collection, the story of a lad ashore on a spree who tries to make love to a beautiful but highly unsubstantial girl in the woods. Coppard can occasionally lift you up by your hair when he is engaged in sheer terror; "The Tiger" and "The Homeless One" are hard to forget. Unlike Coppard, who has not the slightest belief in the supernatural, H. R. Wakefield writes that he has never written a tale "in which there are recorded happenings that I do not believe could occur." This is somewhat difficult to believe if you know his gruesome story of haunting, "The Alley," or his imaginative tale of a ventriloquist's dummy who accused his master of murder.

A previously unpublished atavistic novel by the late A. Merritt, *The Fox Woman*, has recently been printed in an elaborate, illustrated edition. It is worth mentioning because it is an example of another early pulp magazine writer whose work has now become a

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collector's item, and because it reveals the ardor with which the young disciples of these writers attach themselves to idols who are completely unknown to the critics and readers of conventional literature. It seems that Paul Dennis O'Connor, the publisher, chose Hannes Bok, an illustrator, as well as a writer of fantasy, to furnish an ending for the uncompleted *Fox Woman*. Young Mr. Bok was one of the few people in the world who had a complete collection of the master's work, a collection that dated back from his childhood, and that lacked only the first magazine printing of that classic, unknown to the outer world, "The Moon Pool." While in high school he had copied in longhand "The Metal Emperor," another rare item. As a writer, Mr. Bok has been struggling ever since to escape from the influence of Merritt over his own work.

Another publisher has brought out recently four almost forgotten novels of William Hope Dodgson, an English writer, known as "a master of the weird and fantastic." This volume, titled *The House on the Borderland* is the result of a long search; for none of the early anthologists and critics of fantasy mention him—from Edith Birkhead's study of the growth of supernatural literature, *The Tale of Terror* (1921), to Lovecraft's elaborate essay on the subject. Nor could he be found in the anthologies of Bohun Lynch, Dashiell Hammett, T. Everett Hore or Harrison Dare. Hodgson, the son of a clergyman, had been killed in the First World War. His work, devoted mostly to mysteries of the sea, was at last rediscovered, and for over the last decade has been slowly gaining recognition. The publication of this volume is another illustration of the enthusiasm with which this literature is collected and traced to its source. There seems to be, in fact, nothing in any other form of fiction today to resemble this enthusiasm for individual writers of fantasy. Moreover, fantasy literature, in the prefaces and introductions to the various volumes, is finding its own critics, who have no other media in which they can judge and compare writers of fantasy.

The conventional critic surveying a small segment of the teeming literature of fantasy discovers that a new form has been developed for a literary device that is as old as religion itself. We have been accustomed to fantasy in myths and folklore, in stories for children, in political and social satire, and in the dramatization of philosophical

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ideas, ranging from Dean Swift and Sir Thomas More, to Aldous Huxley, C. S. Lewis and Sartre. We have seen an increasing use of fantasy in sections of novels that are otherwise solidly attached to the earth and to human beings. There is a definite strain of fantasy, for example, in the first novel of Truman Capote, *Other Voices, Other Rooms*. It may be developed through dreams, inner monologues, and weird episodes, as a way of explaining intangible aspects of behavior and thought. It serves also to break up the deadly exhaustion of themes into which the novel has fallen, in the same way that the psychoanalyst has in the last twenty years added another dimension to fiction. In a thoughtful novel, it is no longer sufficient to state that a woman has murdered her husband; the reasons for her behavior have to be explored.

The writer of scientific fantasy is free from most of the conventions of other fiction writers. He does not have to prove that a man and a woman living in the year ten thousand A.D. or B.C. love each other; he simply states that they are in love. When his characters converse, they need not be brilliant or amusing, since all of their thoughts are concerned with the scientific theories and adventures in which they are involved. The long arm of coincidence does not bother the author, nor problems of time or place. It is the fantasy itself that counts, the necessity of carving out a fore-ordained experience or experiment. In Philip Wylie's and Edwin Balmer's planetary novels there is no doubt that the men who build space ships to escape the earth's destruction will arrive safely: the only problem is what will they find when they arrive, and what will happen to them. Their relations to each other and whether they are happy or not are of little consequence in relation to their heroic adventure.

Scientific and supernatural fantasy are obviously satisfactory literary devices, since they are capturing hundreds of thousands of readers. Between them, they also have the advantage of an unlimited range of material, and of being almost completely uninhibited in the theories they develop and dramatize. Since fantasy is not an ephemeral art, and has been brought into being from the sheer necessity of the times, it should be studied and evaluated in its own terms—as a cultural and social phenomenon, and as a literary genre.

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Great Day in the Morning!

Robert Brittain

When stethoscopes throb with the steady beat
of hearts unangered, and shoes find feet,
and mortgages mashed are fed to pigs
and from private thistles come public figs;

when tightrope walkers elect to swim
(while he looks at her and she looks at him)
and from all tall towers the pigeons have flown
and the clocks all stop while time ticks on;

then over the vacuum cleaner's whir
(while she looks at him and he looks at her)
the powerful turbine-hum will swell
of love like a bee in a columbine bell

and the thresh of his joyous legs will shake
the puckered trumpets of day awake
and factory whistles as shrill as the sun
will crow that history has begun.

•Poems by ROBERT BRITTAIN, formerly assistant professor at Queens College, have appeared in such publications as *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *Poetry*, *Sewanee Review* and *Anthology of the Younger Poets*. His critical edition of Christopher Smart will be published soon.

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Weir Mitchell As Novelist

Ernest Earnest

SILAS WEIR Mitchell was almost a genius. His contemporaries believed that he was one, an opinion Mitchell came to share. The reasons for this belief were impressive: his book on *Gunshot Wounds and Other Injuries of the Nerves* (1864) was still in use by the French in World War I; his "rest cure" for nervous diseases was famous throughout Europe and America; his discovery of the nature of rattlesnake venom was the foundation stone for later research in the fields of toxicology and immunology; his *Hugh Wynne* was compared to *Henry Esmond*, his *Ode on a Lycian Tomb* to *Lycidas*.

He translated a fourteenth-century poem, *The Pearl*, into modern verse; he wrote a scholarly and controversial biography of Washington, a children's story (*Kris-Kringle*) which went through twelve editions, and an excellent tragic novel about a neurotic woman. These are only highlights: he also wrote thousands of letters, published hundreds of medical papers, several volumes of verse, numerous short stories, two popular books on medicine, and a dozen novels—all this in addition to a medical practice which brought him nearly $70,000 in a peak year. He was equally in demand as a speaker at banquets and before learned societies. Among scores of friends he numbered Oliver Wendell Holmes, Phillips Brooks, Sir William Osler, Andrew Carnegie, William James, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, James Russell Lowell and George Meredith. He was the patron of such different persons as Hideyo Nouguchi and Walt Whitman. He sat on the boards of trust companies, of charitable institutions, and of learned societies. His Saturday evenings at home became famous for good wine and conversation. No wonder he was regarded as the most versatile American since Franklin.

•Professor of English and director of the Havertown Unit of Temple University, ERNEST EARNEST is the author of *John and William Bartram* and *A Foreword to Literature*. Mr. Earnest is now at work on a biography of S. Weir Mitchell.

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Today his novels are little read; his verse is forgotten; his rest cure is outmoded. But though his medical reputation has declined, it is probably secure; his literary reputation is not. Yet there were not many better American novelists between 1885 and 1905. It is time for a revaluation of the man.

At a time when the American novel was chiefly designed for hammock reading, Mitchell was writing the novel of ideas. Not in his historical romances: *Hugh Wynne*, *The Adventures of François* and *The Red City* belong to that spate of historical writing of the 1890's which, as Fred Lewis Pattee says, was "a best-seller phenomenon." This is not to say that Mitchell's historical novels were mere pot boilers. He had the Philadelphian's love for the past, its customs, its food, its furniture. His *Youth of Washington*, based on Washington's early letters and journals, is an excellent and scholarly re-creation of the man. Seven years went into research for *Hugh Wynne*. Mitchell's interest in history was genuine and lifelong. Logan Clendening, looking for material on the history of medicine, found his best source on one topic to be Mitchell's pamphlet, "The History of Instrumental Precision in Medicine." Even so, *Hugh Wynne*, *The Adventures of François* and *The Red City* remain essentially boys' books: high and noble adventure amid glamorous surroundings. Good and evil are separate worlds; there are no difficult ethical choices; the hero apparently never reaches puberty until after the final chapter.

The very success of *Hugh Wynne* threw Mitchell's more adult novels into shadow. Mitchell himself thought *Constance Trescot* his best book; George Meredith admired *Roland Blake*. Both of these are interesting studies of abnormal psychology. Perhaps more unusual, though less excellent, are what might be called the conversation novels: *Characteristics* and *Dr. North and His Friends*. In these two, Mitchell almost entirely abandoned plot in favor of ideas.

To understand and evaluate these ideas, it is necessary to know something of the man, his intellectual development and his cultural milieu. S. Weir Mitchell, born in 1829, was the son of Dr. John Kearsley Mitchell, a successful physician who dabbled in literature and who entertained Poe and Holmes. Despite his father's opinion that he was not fitted for medicine, Weir graduated from Jefferson

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and then studied in France. During the Civil War he served in military hospitals, and was present at the Battle of Gettysburg. As an army doctor Mitchell became interested in nervous diseases to such an extent that when the Surgeon General created the Turner's Lane Hospital in Philadelphia for such cases, Mitchell was put on the staff. Thus out of his war experiences came the realistic battle scenes in *In War Time*, the authoritative *Gunshot Wounds*, and the studies of neurotic personalities such as Octopia Darnell in *Roland Blake* and Benedict Norman in *John Sherwood, Ironmaster*.

Mitchell's slow rise to world-wide medical fame is outside the scope of this paper. His literary development was even slower. In his ambition to become a physician-author, he may have been influenced by the example of Oliver Wendell Holmes. The young physician, trading on his father's friendship with Holmes, sent him a poem with the request that it be recommended to the *Atlantic*. The Autocrat replied that "It is a poet's poem—warm, flushed, even, perhaps at some points a little over-heated"—a charge which could not be brought against any of Mitchell's later writing. Holmes also pointed out a "too great similarity of Tennyson." This was to be a more enduring quality in Mitchell's verse.

It was Holmes who encouraged Mitchell to combine writing and medicine, despite the advice of conservative elder physicians in Philadelphia. They warned that patients might distrust a physician who wrote. Philadelphia has always regarded writers and artists as rather queer fellows. Holmes, however, wrote "... remember Haller and Goethe and make the most of both your talents, by either of which I have no doubt you can achieve reputation."

Mitchell's first prose work grew directly from his medical life. In 1866 he wrote a children's story, *Fuz-Buz the Fly*, to raise money for the Sanitary Fair in Philadelphia; and the *Atlantic* printed his anonymous story, *The Case of George Dedlow*, about a man who had lost all his limbs in the war. The story, after a good realistic beginning, ends on a farce level, but it was so real to the audience of the sixties that they sent contributions to the Stump Hospital in Philadelphia, where Dedlow was supposed to be.

There were some other stories and a novelette; but Mitchell's first real novel, *In War Time*, did not come until he was fifty-five.

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George Meredith, to whom Mitchell sent a copy of the book, recognized it as unusual. He especially praised the way in which the story evolved from character. To the modern reader, certain other qualities seem unusual in a novel of the eighties. Here is war without glamor. A brave soldier, Colonel Fox, admits to a woman that he has been terribly afraid in battle. And Arthur Westerly says of war, "But don't think I like it at all. Anyone who says they like it is stupid, or lies. I don't. I never realized until now how dreadful is war; but I think I know that I ought to be there, and why." That was ten years before *The Red Badge of Courage*.

Several other characteristics distinguish *In War Time* from other novels of its day. One is the psychological insight. Mrs. Morton, growing apart from her husband, finds compensation in lavishing affection on her sons; the charming widow, Mrs. Westerly, falls in love with Dr. Wendell despite her knowledge of his lack of stability; Ann Wendell's unimaginative righteousness causes her to become a baleful influence on her brother, Dr. Wendell, whose very lack of stability and integrity stems somewhat from his own imaginative and over-sensitive nature. In some ways, he is the most complex male character Mitchell ever drew.

There are excellent sketches of minor characters: Mrs. Grace, the troublemaking bore, and Mr. Grace, "who believed in the Pennsylvania Railroad." And there are memorable scenes: the band playing "Maryland, My Maryland" in the military hospital; the row between Alice Westerly and Mrs. Grace; Mrs. Morton seeing her husband off, but centering her interest on her son.

Characteristically, Mitchell takes time out to give his opinions on literature, on the effect of the war on medicine, on the evils of an educational system "which admitted no recognition of individuals," and on the complexity of human motives. This last is a constant theme with Mitchell. It gives his characters depth. Whatever the defects of such a novel, it is obviously more adult reading than most of its American contemporaries.

The next year he published *Roland Blake*, an uneven work, but notable for an unusual study of a neurotic woman, Octopia Darnell. She is one of those demanding semi-invalids whom Mitchell had already described in *Fat and Blood*. Her "fondness for physical

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petting" repels her young cousin Olivia. The elder woman has "an importunate craving for expressions of love and pity." Her emotional vampirism has its effect on Olivia, whose state Michell describes with Freudian insight: "Her head ached, and with the consciousness of constant fatigue, the outcome of a life of strain and repression, began to come its certain result, irritability." The homosexual implication in Octopia's feeling for Olivia is of course carefully veiled, but it is there: Mitchell speaks of the unhealthiness of the relationship, and vividly portrays Olivia's physical repulsion. Not many writers in 1886 handled such material. Nor would many have written, "Character is more subject in women than in men to changes physiologically produced. . . ."

Roland Blake goes further than its predecessor in realistic pictures of war: the sound of bullets hitting a man; the nervous excitement of the men (one "incessantly wiped his gun barrel, another buttoned and unbuttoned his coat"); the pictures of men being bayoneted and clubbed; the horror of a battlefield after the fight.

Not until fourteen years later did Mitchell return to a fictional study of abnormal psychology. During those fourteen years he wrote the two "conversation novels," *Characteristics* and *Dr. North and His Friends*. These are in no sense great works, but they are interesting experiments in the same way that Shaw's plays are interesting experiments. Mitchell lacks Shaw's wit, but he has a deeper insight into people. The characters are not all S. Weir Mitchell. He is in the books, however, as Owen North. He and his friends spend endless hours over good food and wine, or in drawing rooms, just talking. There is Mr. Vincent, the successful and slightly priggish lawyer; Clayborne, the scholar; and St. Clair, the poet-sculptor, mercurial and provocative. Of the women, two stand out: Mrs. Vincent, intelligent and restive in an over-formalized society, and Sybil, Clayborne's neurotic and psychic secretary. Into this ordered world Mitchell brings Xerxes Crofter, the builder and wrecker of railroads.

In the course of the two novels, all sorts of things are discussed: medical theory, extra-sensory perception, honorable and dishonorable business methods, women's education, philosophy, literature, abnormal psychology—in short, these people live in a world of

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ideas. Perhaps *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* is the immediate model. But there is more story; things happen to the characters: emotional entanglements, accidents, controversies. The wit is not equal to that of *The Autocrat*, but the characters are much more fully rounded. The first of the two, *Characteristics*, is less well done than the second, *Dr. North*. It is in the latter that one finds such ideas as, "There should be a psychological consultant for schools." Then there is Dr. North's account of cases where the presence of one person adversely affected the health of another. North, like Meredith, thinks men are losing their instincts faster than they are developing their brains to compensate for the loss.

Like Shaw, Mitchell quotes from himself. Owen North says that he heard Dr. Mitchell tell an anecdote related to his discovery of the nature of rattlesnake venom. Throughout the story there are verse quotations from El Din Attar, a pseudonym of Mitchell's.

A year later came *Circumstance*, a diffuse novel filled with provocative character studies. There is Mary Fairthorne of "strong but not very plastic material," and her cousin Kitty, "as nearly an instinctive creature as evolutionary forces and educational training permit a young woman of her class to be." When Mary heard her uncle's statement that people are "more or less well-trained animals," she "replied, being then of the age of sixteen, that she was not an animal [and], he advised her to adjourn her opinion until she was a mother, which sent her away reflective." Yet it is the restrained Mary who understands Kitty better than does the French-novel-reading adventuress, Mrs. Hunter, who "herself cold and passionless . . . could not fully apprehend the influence which this self-indulgent beauty exercised over so many men."

Two men in the story show unmistakable symptoms of sexual repression. The Reverend Cyril Knellwood, "underfed and overworked—just in the condition when emotions are apt to get out of control," has vowed himself to celibacy. On one occasion he says, "I cannot think what verse of St. Paul would apply to me." Mitchell's comment is, "He might have thought of more than one." It is Knellwood who is attracted to the "beautiful half-trained animal," Kitty, and who, declaring war as "horrible . . . loved the battle-line."

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The other, Roger Grace, is a successful banker who goes off on secret binges. Here is no ten-nights-in-a-barroom drunkard, but a brilliant man of fine character turned alcoholic through psychological maladjustment. Mitchell is both psychologist and artist enough to draw the character sympathetically. Despite a shambling plot, *Circumstance* is an unusual novel for 1901.

Then, at seventy-six, Mitchell published his best novel, *Constance Trescot*. Unlike all his other novels, this is a tragedy: the story of a possessive wife who avenges her husband's murder. She is described as "one of the rare women who, for good or ill, attract because of some inexplicable quality of sex. Incapable of analysis, it accounts for divorces and ruined households, even for suicide or murder. It may be faithful to a great passion, and be modified by character and education, and even by religion, but it is felt, whether the woman wishes it or not, and she who has it instinctively knows its power." George Trescot, being a properly brought up young man of his time, is startled when in their first embrace he finds it at least as much hers as his: "He knew little of women, and nothing of the woman who desires to absorb, so to speak, all the thoughts and feelings of the one man, and who as time goes on, becomes jealous of his friends, and even of his work, and at last, of every hour not given to her." Such heroines were not common in the Gibson Girl era. Using such a character and the background of the post-Civil-War South, Mitchell creates a somber novel of hate and revenge. The passions and the situation develop with the fatefulness of Hardy's work. Had Mitchell written more often like this, his stature would rival that of Henry James.

However, two years after *Constance Trescot*, he returned to the style of *Hugh Wynne* with *The Red City*, a tale of Philadelphia during Washington's presidency. Perhaps the most notable feature is the account of the yellow fever epidemic, told with Defoe-like realism. Then in 1910 came *John Sherwood, Ironmaster*, a rather wooden performance, memorable chiefly for the skillful portrait of the paranoid, Mr. Norman. The theme of the main story is Wordsworthian: the awakening of a hide-bound industrialist to a fuller emotional life through the aesthetic influence of nature.

Even at eighty-four, while still practicing medicine, Mitchell

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found time to write a novel, *Westways*. Fearing that he might die before it was published, he jumped on a train for New York with the manuscript, and importuned the Century Company to bring it out at once. It is by no means his poorest work. There are excellent pictures of the Battle of Gettysburg and the Wilderness campaign. Mitchell tells of "that strange complex odor which rises from a battlefield," of the screams of wounded horses, of a baker's wagon wiped out by a shell, of soldiers laughing at an officer's mishap, of the army post office marking letters " 'not found'—'missing' —and so on." War is "a disgustingly dirty business. You don't realize that in history, in fiction, in pictures. It's filthy." And grumbling is "as natural to an army as barking to a dog."

Then, too, there is an interesting study of the decay of a fine person due to a head wound—a case history skillfully woven into fiction. The minor characters are done with a practiced hand.

What then keeps Mitchell from being first rate? Certainly he is more adult than Winston Churchill, Owen Wister, Marion Crawford or F. Hopkinson Smith. He has more grace than William Dean Howells, a deeper understanding of people. In psychology, the only contemporary who did as much was Henry James.

Part of the answer is Philadelphia. Mitchell never threw off its reticences, its social mores, its emphasis on class and family. He could help to support Walt Whitman, but he could never forget that Walt was not a gentleman. He was a friend of Carnegie's, and he put the malefactor of great wealth, Xerxes Crofter, into his books; yet he has no conception of the America of *The Pit* and *The Octopus*. His people are the absentee owners of coal lands, the Philadelphia aristocracy of bankers and lawyers for inherited estates. In their unchallenged position, they could afford generous charities, fine distinctions of business honor, and a discriminating taste in madeira. They had not become the timid George Apleys and H. M. Pulhams of a later day. Mitchell was almost as unconscious of the proletariat as was Henry James.

A more serious fault is his adherence to the love-story convention of his time. With few exceptions, there is always the pure, clever, strong-minded girl who refuses to acknowledge to herself that she is in love until the last page. If she is a widow, she puts up an even

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longer battle before she "surrenders." She appears in the stories of Stanley Weyman, of Owen Wister, of Winston Churchill—yes, even in Henry James and Frank Norris. One is forced to believe she must have existed—if only in imitation of a literary fashion. Between 1885 and 1915, she was as ubiquitous as the modern clever career woman who in contemporary novels sleeps with a series of wrong partners before finding love. In Mitchell's day, the heroine merely flirted with the wrong man throughout the book, only to marry the hero at last.

As Mitchell demonstrated in *Roland Blake* and *Constance Trescot*, he could draw other types. In fact, Mrs. Hunter, the adventuress in *Circumstance*, is an American Becky Sharp. But for the most part he is content to follow convention. At a number of places he hints at the baleful effects of sexual repression, but none of his "good" characters ever violates the strictest propriety or questions the Elsie Dinsmore code. In *Circumstance* a charming and intelligent girl says "that whether or not she cared enough for a man to be willing to marry him, his divorce would be an insurmountable objection. Yes, she knew him blameless, but this she could never face. It was a matter of sentiment rather than of principle." And Mitchell obviously approved the sentiment. This sentiment, combined with the need for happy endings, produces a rather high mortality among rascally husbands and unfaithful wives.

In medicine Mitchell was often in advance of his age; on most social and economic questions he was behind it. He deplores the fact that ailing workmen must be discharged from hospitals without means of support, but his only solution is a rest home supported by charity. Despite his own voluntary sacrifice of a fortune to aid small depositors of a bank in which he was a director, he shows no glimpse of the effect of panics on the worker. His social order is paternalistic; it revolves around the dinner tables of the wealthy. Even the American Revolution becomes an affair of Philadelphia drawing rooms.

As a physician and neurologist, Mitchell was able to put much into novels that his contemporaries could not. His fiction has an intellectual quality unusual in his day. But, except in *Constance Trescot*, he never let himself go. He never wrote anything which might offend a Philadelphian.

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The Value of Freedom (II)

Karl W. Deutsch

The first half of Dr. Deutsch's essay dealt with historical concepts of freedom and its values, and examined "spiritual" and "inner" interpretations of freedom. It was printed in the Spring number.

IN THE short run, pragmatic balances will have to be struck between temporarily conflicting claims of dependability and flexibility in social organization. Could today's conflicting ideologies among the members of the United Nations perhaps be viewed in this context as different balances, different short cuts to a common goal of freedom, perceived more or less dimly, if at all, by their governments and peoples? Or could it be thought that an underlying logic of events—"leading the willing, dragging the reluctant"—might be pressing them in that direction?

Certainly the great nineteenth-century experiment of Free Trade could be viewed as an attempted short cut to the solution of the problem of freedom and dependable order in an expanding industrial society through the acceptance of the automatic operation of the market. The distribution of efforts, resources and opportunities through the market did prove, in the short run, more dependable

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and flexible, and hence more conducive to the growth of freedom, than what had gone before. But the record seems clear that in the long run Free Trade did not fulfill the great hopes placed in it, although observers differ about the detailed reasons for its failure to do so. Suffice it to say that what emerged from it was a market mechanism neither dependable enough to prevent shattering depressions nor flexible enough to meet the needs of underprivileged, or undeveloped, regions, groups or peoples. For one reason or another, one and a half centuries after the days of Adam Smith, the automatic competition of markets has largely ceased to be the main effective regulator in human affairs.

The acceptance of the market has been replaced, in some parts of the world, by another hoped-for short cut: far-reaching collectivism, far-reaching planning of community efforts and most of community life. This planning has been carried out by a central authority, having gained more or less wide popular support but making its crucial decisions within a relatively small group of persons, to be accepted and followed subsequently by the rest of the people, often with little scope for popular criticism, initiative or organized dissent, except in secondary matters. But this path, too, has not provided that automatic attainment of freedom that some of its followers hoped for.

Even in making the most favorable assumptions for collectivism, there remains the crucial problem whether long acceptance of collectivist discipline, unopposed by other trends, may not engender *habits* of authority among leaders and of blind conformity among the led, which may leave both unable to meet new, unforeseen situations, and so reduce their community's long-run chances for survival.

One answer to this question was given in the case of the total mobilization of the resources of the community carried out by the Fascist governments of Germany, Italy and Japan, for the purposes of conquest, looting and forcible exploitation of other countries and peoples. It was accompanied in these three Axis countries by official doctrines rejecting individualism altogether, not only for any passing period of emergency, but forever, as unsuited to the alleged permanent characteristics of human nature—which led Hitler to prophesy a Nazi Reich lasting for at least one thousand years,

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and Mussolini to affirm "the eternal, immutable and beneficial inequality of man." This permanent rejection of individual freedom in theory was matched by its rejection even in the details of daily practice, from the "leadership principle" to the Fascists' stress on "hierarchy," and the famous slogans, "Believe, Obey, Fight," and "Mussolini is always right," drummed into the heads of adults and children. Fascist collectivism was characterized by robbery as its main aim, and tyranny in every major detail as its method. No forces making for freedom could flourish under it.

Other types of collectivist control of national efforts and resources may give rise to contradictory trends within their domestic evolution—trends which may well clash in the future. How such an internal clash of tendencies would end, none can say today with certainty. Some thoughtful observers have seen the odds as somewhat in favor of the eventual establishment of individual civil liberties as we now understand them in the West; others have been more pessimistic. Perhaps the presence or absence of further successful democratic developments of civil liberties and economic prosperity in the Western countries may have a far-reaching influence over the outcome.

One major factor in the outcome may well be the participants' *awareness* of this long-run problem of collectivism. Blind acceptance of centralized planning, with no thought given to its long-run consequences for men's habits and abilities for individual innovations and decisions, may not only warp the personality structure of individuals, but may also have serious consequences for the physical shaping of the social economy, the allocation of its resources. In ignorance of this aspect, these material features might then be so developed as to minimize rather than maximize the number of opportunities for individual choice, and thus increase the rigidity and the chances of ultimate decline of the community.

This brief discussion of collectivism may suggest some major points which may prove useful in weighing the different long-run prospects of freedom in Eastern Europe, in the gradual democratic socialism of many West European countries, in the government-regulated individualism of the American New Deal, and in the future development of large-scale private enterprise.

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In viewing these so different patterns, we have to weigh the view that increasing centralization of economic control is inevitable under all existing modern economic systems, and that we have to rely mainly on ethics and on civil liberties to offset this universal trend:

> With the general advance in the use of machines and technical processes, an advance which is affecting practically every portion of the globe, there is an increasing and inevitable compulsion toward greater centralization of managerial and control functions in economic life. That increase may take various forms. In some countries, like our own, it may lead to greater concentrations of managerial power primarily in private hands. In other countries concentration may take place primarily in government or in semi-governmental authorities, and it is to this that I shall be referring when I use the word "collectivism" in talking to you now. But the concentration *is* taking place everywhere, in one form or another.
>
> (George F. Kennan, "American Capitalist Democracy in a Collectivist Environment." Address before the Williams College Spring Conference Board, Williamstown, Massachusetts, May 2, 1947. Multigraphed by Williams College, p. 2, *et passim.*)

To the degree that such a general trend toward centralization can be shown to exist, it would suggest three major dangers which would be to some degree common to all major varieties of modern industrial society: (1) Automatic acceptance of increasing centralization of economic decisions may lead to a shrinking of individual opportunities for choice and so to a shrinking of freedom. (2) Such blind acceptance may lead to a loss of individual habits of initiative, originality and adaptability to new situations, and so reduce the community's long-run chances for survival. (3) Blind acceptance of ever-growing centralization may direct the capital investments of the community into a single ever more rigid pattern, leaving its resouces ill-developed and ill-distributed for the purpose of meeting new and unforeseen contingencies.

If we keep these dangers in mind, can we try to control them? And if we so try, what significant changes might become necessary in our allocation of efforts and resources in providing for the political and economic developments of the future?

VII

A concept of freedom that is to be used in suggesting preferences

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for long-range development should fulfill certain basic conditions. It should apply to *individuals*, and to growing numbers of them. It should be concerned with the *widening* of individual *choices in all directions*, despite the frequent practical need to sacrifice temporarily a smaller range of choices in one direction, in order to gain a larger range of new choices in another.

For a simple example of this point, let us think of a man afoot who has a wide range of choices as to the direction in which he wants to walk and the time when he wants to do so, but only a very narrow choice of speeds of traveling or of the distances which he might cover in a given time. When this man takes a train or bus, he gains a much wider choice of speeds and distances, but has to accept a narrower choice of times and directions as provided by the existing bus routes, railroad tracks, and timetables. But when this man finally acquires a private car, he may choose not only from a range of speeds and distances comparable to that offered by public transportation, but as well from a range of starting times and directions comparable to that of the pedestrian.

The point here is that historical advances in the growth of human powers have often involved a temporary sacrifice of certain ranges of freedom as a price for an increase of freedom in other directions, and that there is no guarantee that further advances in power will automatically restore the balance. (In our example, future research might have concentrated on ever bigger and faster long distance trains, with no provision for more individual modes of rapid traveling.) Long-range growth of freedom will require the balancing out of every one-sided temporary development, through development of wider ranges of choice in all directions and as a deliberate consideration in the making of long-range policy.

Many of the new ranges of human choice have only become available through more elaborate cooperation of individuals in groups—tribes, peoples, industries, schools, classes, national economies, governments, and the like. In addition to the choices which can be made accessible to the individual directly, there are now—and there may be still more so in the future—important ranges of choices which are available to the individual only *indirectly*, through his *choice of affiliation with one or another social group*. If freedom is

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to continue growing, provisions must be made for preserving and widening the individual's chances to choose between such groups.

This can be done in part through policies making it easy for a man to belong effectively to many different groups at one and the same time. This policy is known as *Pluralism*. However, Pluralism is not always practicable; some group experiments may require an intensity of effort and a depth of commitment which may tend to override, at least temporarily, some or even most of the other loyalties which Pluralism ordinarily includes. Are such intensive group experiments and individual commitments to be excluded from each man's range of choice? Examples for such extreme commitments—and the creative results to which some of them have led—abound in the history of art, politics and religion. Could a policy that made moderation compulsory be still itself considered moderate? And how can we ever be sure just which degree of single-minded commitment to some particular action or experiment will be required to meet the not perfectly foreseeable necessities of the world that surrounds us?

If we cannot, then, exclude even very far-reaching commitments requiring conceivably an individual's entire energy, we can at least try to preserve freedom by insisting that a man's commitment to one particular policy or course of action wherever possible *should not destroy irretrievably other men's chances to choose a different course*, now or at some time in the future. In practice this may mean a deliberate preference for policies which tend to *preserve a broad range of alternative patterns, groups or institutions*, in such locations and with such equipment as to preserve for as many individuals as possible some substantial freedom of choice between them, and to provide them with some chance to reconsider and retrace even major steps which should have proved disappointing.

There is a problem of balance here between the freedom of changing one's mind and the freedom and power that could possibly be gained through perseverance in one's decisions. In practice, the question how many alternative facilities and group patterns society should preserve, may be closely linked to the question just what society can afford at that particular time. Cortez may have had to burn his ships behind him in order to steel his wavering handful of men

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for the conquest of Mexico. Had he come with an army, he might have been able to afford more generous provisions for a possible change of plans.

If the long-range freedom that society should provide is so closely bound to what it can afford, and if the steady extension of freedom were made a major consideration of policy, what would be the first practical applications to political and economic decisions?

VIII

We have discussed some of the spiritual implications of freedom earlier in this paper. It remains to add some of the material conditions necessary for its growth.

The first material need for a continued growth of freedom is a *continued advance toward abundance in productive equipment and resources*. This would have to include, among others, sources of energy and raw materials, manufacturing facilities, transportation equipment, and trained manpower and facilities for scientific research.

A policy of widening the range of individual choices would also have to aim at creating generous *reserve capacities* in power, fuel, materials, equipment and the like, so as to permit wide variations between peak loads and average utilization of facilities. The less high peak loads can be accommodated, the more narrowly must consumers' choices be limited as to the time at which they may draw upon the facilities in short supply—a fact recently illustrated by the need for increased government controls in Britain to enforce staggered work hours in industry, so as to equalize peak loads on power stations, and perhaps transportation equipment and other limited facilities.

Increase in equipment would have to occur in *all* relevant directions. Otherwise those important groups of facilities which had not been enlarged would turn into bottlenecks reducing the range of individual choices in wider fields.

The terms "increase" and "abundance" are, of course, relative, not absolute. Most obviously, they are relative to the *growth of population*: the range of choices open to an individual in the average depends on the average per capita amount of equipment and

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facilities. With the threatening shade of the Reverend Robert Malthus in the background, we might conclude that we could increase the proportion of facilities to people either by slowing down the growth of population or by speeding up the growth of equipment and productive knowledge. Quite apart from the factors which have in recent decades tended to slow down population growth wherever living standards have risen to what today is called a "middle-class" level,* there seems to be no good reason why the growth of productive equipment and knowledge should not continue to keep ahead of any probable growth of population in the future, if the continued high growth in equipment is retained as a major aim of policy.

In actual fact, the growth of productive facilities in the American private enterprise economy seems to have kept well ahead of its growth of population, so that Americans may be expected to have on the average a wider range of choices available to them today than they had, *e.g.*, in 1927. A similar growth seems to have occurred the economies of many other countries representing a wide variety of economic policies, but it is less certain how much of a net gain in the growth of equipment over that of population could be shown for the millions of Asia, or for mankind as a whole. In the long run, in any case, there seems to be no reason why any such gain should be maintained indefinitely without deliberate attention.

Should we then mainly try to slow down population growth or eventually try to stop it altogether? Apart from any possible religious objections to such a course, does not our answer depend on whether we are used to think of people as assets or liabilities? If the average man is a liability who impoverishes his fellows by consuming more than he produces, then the fewer there are of him the better. But if we find that in the long run people have tended to produce more than they consumed, that their productive powers may be temporarily frustrated by a shortage of complementary facilities,

*The bottleneck today seems to be not food, but personal relationships and education. Let us assume that two college-educated parents in the United States could afford to feed on starches ten children, but provide a vitamin-rich diet only for eight, good clothing only for six, have close personal relationships with four, and afford a college education for two—would it be surprising to find that the number of children in most such families varied between two and four?

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but that in the long run human beings represent the most adaptable, the most flexible, and the most innovating and creative of productive factors, then we may well conclude that for long periods to come a continued increase in the number of human individuals may be a source of greater welfare and freedom to each of them, provided only that we continue to provide them with a growing range of facilities to exercise their powers.

This means for the long run a *deliberate priority* in the allocation of resources to *basic investments*, and in particular to those lines of pure and applied scientific research which promise a chance to break eventually those bottlenecks of scarcity which now stand between mankind and relative abundance. Such lines of potential "abundance research" would seem to include today, first of all, the search for *new sources of energy and food*, such as intensive large-scale research in the productive utilization of nuclear energy and solar energy, so as to break our potential limitations from present supplies of water power and fuels. As to food, beyond possible future gains from applied biology, a major target may well become the accomplishment of food synthesis and photosynthesis, so as to permit men eventually to parallel on an industrial scale some of the basic processes that occur in plants and mosses, adding the vast resources of sunlight and of the earth's atmosphere and minerals to the potential sources of human food supply. While some of these things may not be accomplished for a considerable time, there seems no cogent reason why they should not eventually be accomplished, or why their accomplishment could not be hastened by deliberate effort.

In the field of manufacturing, the deliberate promotion of relative abundance might require special emphasis on all processes increasing directly or indirectly the *physical productivity of human labor*, including such key facilities as assembly lines, the machine tool industries, and automatic control processes, electronic or other in nature.

Generally, the long-run promotion of abundance might require deliberate large-scale support for a *broad* development of scientific research, "pure" as well as "applied"—two provisional distinctions in any case, with advances in "pure" science usually leading in the

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long run to "applications," and *vice versa*. In the long run, the point may lie in the broadness of the effort rather than in its deliberate guidance in a single direction, since it is impossible to foretell in advance which new discovery not yet made will open up which new insights or new possibilities of application. Short-run compromises may have to be made in the allocation of limited scientific personnel and equipment to what appear temporarily as particularly critical tasks. But it should never be forgotten that, beyond the field of technical coordination and of gaining certain economies of scale, much of the centralized direction of scientific effort is at best a compromise with poverty, and runs the ever present risk of losing or postponing hitherto unknown new insights or discoveries of as great (or greater) importance as those which it endeavors to accelerate. Once the efficiencies of coordination and large-scale effort are given their due, it may yet appear that freedom to follow the logic of scientific theories and facts, as well as the highest abilities and interests of individuals, may have a major productive value—as well as a human value—of their own.

The second and perhaps crucial basic need in the promotion of freedom is for deliberate *decentralization* of locations of new investments and new industrial and administrative centers, so as to permit wider ranges of choice in drawing upon their services, as well as lessened dependence on any one center.

The third line of approach might be that of vigorous development of potential *substitutes* for many of today's basic goods and services. Such substitutes—of which the fixation of nitrogen from air or the synthesis of rubber from petroleum are past examples—would again tend to lessen specific situations of dependence and extend the range of human choices.

As a fourth approach, a *multiplication of regional opportunities for different social and economic group patterns* in different parts of the world, and the maintenance of peaceful relations between them, might go far in preserving some measure of freedom for individuals, groups or whole peoples to choose the economic or ideological pattern of society under which they want to live, as well as to preserve at least somewhere the existence of alternative patterns if they should later choose to reconsider their earlier decision. Here

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again, the actual degree of freedom of choice will be limited by practical considerations, but the preservation of regional opportunities for alternative group patterns and for new steps in man's never-ending search for *new* experiments, may well prevent such freedom from becoming entirely submerged.

In the fifth place, the long-range growth of freedom may require a continued widening of *opportunities for individuals to acquire higher skills, including the skills of management*, and thus a lessening of the dependence of any community on the limited number of individuals who possess these "bottleneck skills" at any particular time. The degree to which any community succeeds in developing its basic educational facilities *so as to overcome any significant scarcity of skilled specialists and managers* may well prove a fair measure of the degree to which it has succeeded in *reducing any actual or potential monopolistic power of these skill groups* and so to strengthen the freedom of the bulk of its members.

Any techniques tending to reduce the need for centralized decisions, or to simplify and facilitate the operations of management, or to eliminate the need for such direct skilled management in any particular situation—for example, the various card files, switchboards, I.B.M. machines, automatic control equipment, down to the replacement of a skilled traffic policeman by a "clover leaf" crossing—all these devices, in so far as they can be further improved and developed, could be used as auxiliary instruments in this growth of freedom.

As a sixth and last of these broad considerations, let us suggest the problem of *balance in the supply and demand of personal services.* Most material goods can be multiplied, at least in principle, by an increase in industrial resources. But the specific demand for individual human services can for the most part only be supplied by the time and effort of another human being. If under our concept of freedom, most individuals should choose to demand greatly extended personal services from other individuals, the community might prove unable to supply these demands, *even after a great increase in its industrial facilities*. This problem has a good deal of practical significance: we find precisely in the large cities and among the educated classes of the most advanced industrial countries of the

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world an urgent and ever-growing demand for extensive personal services—such as concerns the supervision of children; care for the aged, the sick and the mentally ill; aids in housework; facilities for travel, hotels, etc. All these demands imply a shift of jobs, previously done by large numbers of overworked members of families, to institutions and services outside the family. If and when the current middle-class level of incomes and habits should spread to the entire population, continuous major maladjustments in many of these institutionalized services may result, unless deliberate attention is directed in advance toward multiplying the facilities and manpower for these services, improving their quality, and avoiding a shift of less critical services from the shoulders of the family, at least so long as the more critical services cannot yet be supplied satisfactorily by the community.

IX

If all these six groups of considerations are taken together, can we use them perhaps as a yardstick to evaluate today specific courses of action in the current international or domestic policy of states for their significance for the further growth of freedom?

Any detailed answer to this question would go far beyond the limits of this inquiry. Briefly, it is suggested that these considerations can be so applied. In evaluating, to choose a recent example, the British proposal to permit at this time nationalization of the coal mines in the Ruhr, should we not weigh, in addition to considerations of immediate efficiency, the possible widening of choices for the people of Germany and to some degree of the rest of Western Europe, by making available to them a working example of the British blend of the Western traditions of individual liberties with some moderate degree of nationalization, as long proposed by democratic sections of the Western European labor movement? Or, in weighing the French government's request to transfer a larger part of Western Europe's steel-making capacity from Germany to France, should we not weigh—in addition to considerations of transport costs, investment needs, and administrative convenience—the possible gain to freedom and stability for all of Europe which might result from replacing the one-sided concentration of steel-making capacity in the

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territory of a single nation by its more even distribution among Germany and the more stable democracies of France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg? Or finally, in rejoicing in the increase in material welfare in the United States as against, say, even twenty years ago, should we not recognize and cherish as separate and important values the wider spread of opportunities and the real growth in fundamental democratic liberties that has occurred in this country since 1927? And could we not continue to ask systematically of every proposal of new policy or every claim of past performance: "Just what are its implications, or its record, in terms of wider choices for the mass of individuals?"

If freedom does not grow, it may well dwindle. If we become more able to measure the extent and direction of its growth, we may become more able to keep it growing.

★

Correction

We regret that in our Autumn, 1947, number, on page 489, the name of Mr. Charles A. Dukes was incorrectly listed in connection with the Duke University Press. The director of the Press is Dr. William T. Laprade and the associate director, Mr. A. G. Brice. The correct address is College Station, Box 6697, Durham, N. C.

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To Read Tacitus, in Wartime

Eve Triem

Under the purple asters in a bowl
The box has voices: street-piano *blues*
Or Bach toccata; and cries, tongued to pursuade,
The names of soaps and drugs and bonds and bullets;
And, every hour on the hour, pours out news.
Magical box: pouring out songs and blood.
And the book in my lap—the Latin—tells
Much the same thing, two thousand years apart.

The grandeur, the extravagance, the deceptions, the wars.
Twin-tongued, book and box sing the same tune:
The individual life broken, the mass-life crushed,
Till I must run out of doors where the dusk
Has no word and no song, but its life is
The aster and the sinking star, Arcturus.

To read is to pity, hungry, the half-naked legions
Of Rome, and their violent fall in foreign places;
To toll for the rape of Jerusalem;
To bring wreaths, but to bring them in vain,
For the white cities of the Greek and the slain Greek boys.

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And now box and book sing together:
Destruction of peoples, wasting of villages:
The murdered Serb children, the charred beams of Naples.
Singing in praise of Stalingrad, symbol for courage,
But also for horror dancing in thousands of places.

I go in despair through the faintly bitter dusk.
My steps are shouts against my pure, still sky.
(So many other skies are filled with burning)
My blood is raging that I still can live;
(So many wounds upon so many bodies)
Through all remembered time—so tolls the book,
And now . . . and now! So shrieks the clever box.

•EVE TRIEM's poems have appeared in *Poetry*, the *Yale Review*, the *New York Times*, *Voices*, the *Tiger's Eye* and THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. Her first book of poems, *Parade of Doves*, was published last November.

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Portrait . . .

CHRISTIAN GAUSS

At a meeting of the Editorial Board held in January, it was unanimously agreed that Christian Gauss, long-beloved Dean of Princeton and our consulting editor, should be the subject of the PORTRAIT *in this number. It was further agreed that Dean Gauss, who was not present, should not be informed of this decision, but should receive the Summer number as a surprise "birthday gift," celebrating his seventieth year. Finally, we agreed to make this* PORTRAIT *a composite—that is, instead of having one writer contribute a long article, we would invite three people who had known him in different ways to write three short ones. These pieces follow, together with the letter of thanks which Dean Gauss wrote to the Board members upon receipt of their telegram, congratulating him on his seventieth birthday. (Editor)*

"True Wayfaring Christian"

Marjorie Nicolson

Princeton claims him, but to me Christian Gauss is a "Michigan man." Although he took his bachelor's degree many years before I did, we belong to the same college generation. There is, I think, a contemporaneity in education that has nothing to do with chronological years. All of us who graduated from college before "that last year that ever was, 1914," had a common youth.

Ann Arbor was Christian Gauss's home, as mine, when it was still a quiet village, with the charm and fragrance of its name, long before it became a country club for Detroit or a mere suburb of Willow Run. He and I went to Michigan in days when ivory towers were respectable and it was legitimate to "withdraw from life" for four placid years.

Teachers are always a bond, and he and I had many in common. I am sure that he learned some of his Greek from Martin Luther D'Ooge, and remembers that wiry little man who in his excitement would throw off his coat, loosen his collar and tie, and dance out the meters of a choral ode. I must remember to ask Christian sometime whether he, too, laboriously built Caesar's

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•Formerly dean of Smith, now professor of English in the Graduate School of Columbia University, MARJORIE NICOLSON last year won the Crawshay prize for her book, *Newton Invokes the Muse*. Miss Nicolson gave the Messenger lectures at Cornell this spring.

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bridge, as I did, à la Kelsey, not with timbers and beams and fascines, but with gerunds and ablative absolutes. Earle Dow was teaching history in Gauss's day as in mine; perhaps it was he who first made the young Middle Westerner conscious of Europe, particularly of France, later to be so important in his life. Fred Newton Scott, already making Michigan the chief American center of "Rhetoric," may have helped Gauss become the artist in words he is. All these, and others like them, laid the early basis for that humane and liberal education Gauss has continued to develop all his life.

One teacher I know we shared. The first time I heard Christian Gauss's name was from the lips of that dramatic Scot, Robert Mark Wenley, who must have been Michigan's *enfant terrible* in Gauss's day. He was still popularly considered the Arch-Heretic in mine. At one time I was Wenley's only student in "Advanced Metaphysics"—much too advanced for me. Wenley held that "class" in his home where, with his wife knitting in the corner as chaperone for the coed, he lay on a *chaise longue*, sipping Scotch and soda and smoking a very black cigar, interrupting my ineptitudes on the essential nature of reality to say, with a burr I cannot reproduce: "Unless ye can drink *this* and smoke *that*, ye'll ne'er be a metaphysician." Sometimes he gave up the struggle to teach me and lapsed into reminiscences about his early life in Scotland, and about the good old days at Michigan when he had found student-flint worthy his steel. Gauss in those days had been a legend among students and was the one of all his disciples Wenley had chosen as heir to his mantle. "And what happened to him?" he would ask rhetorically with dour sarcasm. "He went into Romance languages!" The nadir of nothingness, I concluded, as I politely mourned with the professor of philosophy for a lost soul. Gauss did not become a "professional philosopher" (which always sounds to me like a contradiction in terms). Yet when I met him many years later, I knew that he had remained, as he began, a philosopher.

Gauss and I shared our university president, James Burrill Angell. Perhaps the angelic whiskers were not so white in Gauss's day as in mine, but they must have been as whimsical. Angell had brought to our Midwestern state university the philosophical and educational transcendentalism of Vermont. He made Michigan an institution unique in American education, a state university that looked back to the East in its feeling for tradition, and forward to the West in its freshness and vigor: a true amphibian that could never make up its mind whether it was Eastern or Western, except in so far as football was concerned. Christian Gauss carried with him to Princeton the goodly heritage of his Alma Mater, an equal respect for tradition and for progress, an understanding of East and of Middle West.

He was to spend most of his life at Princeton, but that more elegant, aristocrátic, wealthy Eastern university never took from Christian Gauss certain homespun qualities he still has, that I like to think typically "Michigan"—simplicity, straightforwardness, lack of ostentation and display, democracy. Money, family, "social position," never meant anything to him. They meant nothing to us at Michigan. None of us had them. None of us missed them.

It is significant, I think, that the next time Christian Gauss came alive to me was during the Depression, when I read in the *Saturday Evening Post* a scathing satire on "the scholarship racket," in which the Dean of Princeton ironically lamented the plight of the "new poor," begging scholarships for their sons because they had put up their yachts for the winter, although they still used three cars. As I read that article with amusement and sympathy—I too was then a dean of a country college—I recognized a voice from our past at Michigan, where young men and young women thought nothing of earning their way through college.

Dean Gauss and I used to meet occasionally at decanal gatherings to which he went, I suspect, only as did I, when he could not avoid them. Our real acquaintance and close friendship waited until we were both working for the United Chapters of

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Phi Beta Kappa. I have often wondered what leads busy men and women, usually the busiest of all, to devote themselves to such causes and organizations, from which they receive no financial reward, in return for their services, for which they often receive curt thanks. Why Dean Gauss, one of the ablest and busiest college administrators of his time, bothered as he did about Phi Beta Kappa I can only guess.

Certainly it was not because of any youthful loyalty to the oldest American fraternity. Gauss was stirred by no adolescent memories of a moment when he "made Phi Bete"—a goal that, once attained, often proves an end rather than a beginning. Wearers of the key may be shocked to learn that Christian Gauss, President of the United Chapters, never "made" Phi Beta Kappa, though he was later elected an honorary member at Princeton. It was not his fault! There was no chapter at Michigan in his day. President Angell persistently opposed Phi Beta Kappa, as he opposed the introduction of a marking system at Michigan. In his mind, the two went hand in hand. The inauguration of either would lead to over-emphasis upon marks rather than upon leisurely attainment of knowledge. Only in 1907 did Angell reluctantly give way and admit a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. Grades were not given at Michigan until well after his retirement. I was to live under both systems. When I entered Michigan we either "passed" or "failed"; when I left, students received grades, which in those first years were as whimsical as Angell's whiskers. In Gauss's time, and in most of mine, one studied—or did not study—at Michigan for no such "fair guerdons" as grades and keys. If one group got by with less labor than today, another group, to which Christian Gauss belonged, managed to get a liberal education.

Yet Phi Beta Kappa, of which he knew nothing when he was an undergraduate, has had no more loyal and devoted member than Christian Gauss. I think his first association with the society came about at the time of the establishment of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. He was one of our founders; he has remained an invaluable member of the Board ever since 1931. In 1934 he was elected to the Phi Beta Kappa Senate. He has never missed a meeting of the Council since that time. He has served on every important committee, and has been the backbone of the executive committee that handles all interim business for the Senate and the Council. I shall not try to list his many services. I shall only say that during the six years of my own presidency, "frozen" as I was for the duration, a difficult situation might have become unbearable had it not been for his quiet voice, his common sense, his strength behind the scenes.

Not long ago, at a dinner meeting of the Senate, some of us amused ourselves by applying descriptive epithets to our distinguished colleagues at other tables. "What," I asked, "is Gauss's salient characteristic?" The answer came in unison: "Common sense!" I have even more reason than our colleagues to appreciate the very *uncommon* sense of Christian Gauss, yet that was not the phrase that sprang to my mind. Had I answered my own question that evening, I should have said: "Sweetness."

"Sweetness and light?" our outraged Senators might have replied in chorus. I was not thinking of Arnold, nor even of Swift, from whom Arnold borrowed his phrase. Surely no one could call Swift a sentimentalist. If there was any literary source in my subconscious, it lay deeper than Arnold or Swift. Perhaps I was thinking of the riddle of Samson: "*Out of strength came forth sweetness, and out of the eater came forth meat.*" Since I have been a dean myself, I am quite sure that Dean Gauss has eaten many a Princeton student alive. I suspect that the best of those Princetonians the tiger ate became *meat* because of his savagery.

The sweetness that continues to impress me in Christian Gauss has in it no element of weakness. It is not the sweetness of saccharin—or is it? After I started to write that sentence, my scholarly conscience led me to "research" on saccharin. According to Webster, saccharin is "a bitter crystalline lactone . . . a crystalline compound, remarkable for its sweetness, varying from 300 to 550 times that of cane sugar." It is

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a substitute for sugar, used, Webster tells me in his dry way, particularly by those who need to be deflated. Webster adds laconically, "It is also antiseptic." I take back my original stricture. Gauss's *is* the sweetness of saccharin rather than of cane sugar or of Samson's honey. Like his wit and wisdom, his sweetness remains antiseptic. It is the sweetness of ripeness. As Shakespeare said—no matter what Edgar meant—"Ripeness is all." Gauss's is the sweetness of a nut, of mint, of an orange at the moment when "the ripened fruit is golden to the core," its acid stringency only enhancing the full savor.

Christian Gauss is so accustomed to puns upon his "christian" name that he probably thinks I used my title in jest. I did not. "He that can distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better," Milton wrote, "he is the true wayfaring Christian." If, as some modern editors insist, Milton originally wrote "warfaring," rather than "wayfaring," it is still all one for my purpose. Yet that homespun quality in Christian Gauss, which was his at Michigan and has continued to remain his at Princeton, does not really remind me so much of Milton's Christian as it does of Bunyan's in *Pilgrim's Progress*.

It cannot have been easy to bear such a name as "Christian" in our modern pagan times. Christian Gauss has worn his name, as he has worn his many offices, with native dignity. At the same time, he has worn his learning and his years lightly. It is difficult to think of him in scriptural terms of three-score-years-and-ten. There is something timeless, ageless about him. Dean Emeritus of Princeton, President of the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, he still remains the simple unassuming Christian Gauss who was my own contemporary at Michigan. On his seventieth birthday I send him greetings from his colleagues in Phi Beta Kappa, most of all from his associates on the board of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. For his reminiscence and my own, I express those greetings in familiar words he and I used to sing when we were young together in Ann Arbor:

Laudes atque carmina, nec hodie nec cras,
Sed omnia per tempora, dum locum habeas . . .

Christian Gauss and the Everlasting Job

R. P. Blackmur

Only those who have felt the force from behind can give impulse to those who come afterwards. Only those hold their inheritance who make it fast every day on the edge of time to come. Only those have force who know it is not theirs unless it is given to others, from the living to the living. I speak of the affairs of that great continuing human enterprise, which are for the most part conducted either anonymously and at random, or desperately and with fanaticism: the enterprise whose failures are our history and whose only success is our survival. It seems to me there has always been a representative race of men which, understanding what is desperate and fanatic, has itself stood for what is anonymous and random. It is by the example of that race that we understand the excesses of great men and of mass movements; it is by contact with that race that we gain the impulse and borrow the courage to keep up what is human in us and make that our enterprise. If we feel the touch, we know by the

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warmth of it what it is we have to do. That touch—that contact—is the only human resource by which we get at the force which underlies our own desperations and fanaticisms and makes us seem fit to survive.

Christian Gauss belongs to that race; he affords that touch or contact; he represents what keeps us going; and he stands at the head of what he represents because he knows what it is that he represents, but knows also that he cannot, if he is to transmit it to others, commit himself to any one form of it as necessarily superior to any other form of it. He knows that he represents not a doctrine of life but the condition of living. No doubt it is his awareness of his own hidden excesses that reminds him of this, as it is his earned modesty that reminds us.

I say modesty, not tolerance; for it is one of the advantages of this race of men, that its members may have the courage of radical intolerance. They know, as T. E. Lawrence once put it, that forced good is as intolerable as forced evil; that the individual may be as criminal within his rights as the mob in its breach of rights. They know that offenses must needs come because they know the mob within the individual. Such knowledge makes modesty in demeanor, firmness in mien, certainty in decision, warmth in judgment. As it rests on insights other than its own, it has foresight beyond itself. Feeling so much behind it, it sees far and variously ahead. Its vital dogma is to feel and see and imagine more than it merely knows; for its surest lesson, on the record, is that it can afford to be wrong on the mere facts if it can keep the sense of responsivness to the conditions of living.

These are generalities, but I am not troubled at having made them except for their stiffness; they are serious enough, I hope, so that all readers who have known Dean Gauss will know at once a hundred ways how to transform them back into terms of that wonderfully flexible character they are meant to generalize. Dean Gauss is one of those experiences which lead the mind to find in even its most generalized conclusions only so many steps forward. Those who have not known him will perhaps follow some illustrations, which those who have known him would only wish to replace with their own.

Sitting once some hours at a table where a project to which we were both deeply committed was being debated with some chance of decision, we heard every standard we stood for cheapened and every intent of policy stupefied in a polemic of self-will and ignorance by a figure of national reputation, who had been invited to the session for advice and honest judgment. The man had only his charm for his defense. Dean Gauss took a good part in the debate when occasion offered, and although our project was defeated, the victory for the stranger was pyrrhic. Dean Gauss did not raise his voice, he richened its timbre, and by the increased presence he thereby gained, was himself a terrible weapon of irony for those who could feel it. Against that richened voice, we could see that in the long term of our enterprise, the stranger was about done for. He had won only the occasion, by using all he had. We had lost only an opportunity, which, by losing, we discovered we could not possibly have won and survived.

In that scene, a number of the qualities generalized above show clear. Others show in a very different, and what I suppose must be a more nearly normal, occasion. A student of mine having been, as it turned out, blackmailed by another falsely, I was called in by Dean Gauss to help clarify matters. He had the remote warm weariness of long intimacy with the incurable unseemliness of human beings, which filled the air of the room where we sat. The matter could be brought to a stop, but there was no way to repair the damage to personality that had been done. The raw forces of life seemed overwhelming, and the office all gloom, when, as it were, Dean Gauss reached back and felt the force from behind. It is in Dante's *Inferno* that men are judged in the overwhelming images of their own sins. By quoting in full voice some six or seven tercets from the right canto of the *Inferno*, Dean Gauss brought the scene to a close with the sense that we

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at least understood what the justice was that could not be done.

I have been weighting Dean Gauss's qualities with his voice. The first time I saw him, for my interview before I became associated with the creative arts program, which, more than anyone else, he had set up at Princeton in order to put the creation of arts and letters officially on the same footing as the study of their history. He had practically no voice at all, only by an act of will against doctor's orders anything above a whisper. Yet it was the resonance of his personality that I caught more than anything else. At the time I thought it was kindness, cordiality, warmth, that made me feel so at home in so naturally awkward a situation; but these were only the attributes, let us say the mere true play, of his real force.

When I had known him some three years, I found that what had made me at home that morning was a very rare thing. Dean Gauss is one of the three men I have known for whom any independent mind should not only be willing but eager to work. I did not realize it at the moment, but I knew nevertheless that I could always go to him in full confidence that just so far as I had anything really to say, I would be understood—if not from his point of view, then from my own. It is because they themselves are engaged in it as the very condition of life, that such men offer the everlasting job. It is only from them that we can take it, with affection.

Portrait of a Humanist

Donald A. Stauffer

I do not remember ever hearing Christian Gauss talk about armadillos or Chinese music or the geology of South Africa. I mentioned this not to show Mr. Gauss's limited knowledge, but my own limited knowledge of Mr. Gauss. He may very well know a lot about armadillos. And I have heard him talk about almost everything else.

For three years as an undergraduate and graduate student, I worked as his part-time secretary when he was chairman of the Department of Modern Languages and director of public relations at Princeton. Probably he was worth all the rest of my academic career. If no man is a hero to his valet, he has even less of a chance of hoodwinking an amanuensis. The fine flow of a stylist may appear in process of dictation as a series of long silences punctuated by "Cross that out" or "Let's begin over." The diplomat in a conference or an interview may change, as soon as his visitors have left, into a growler before his secretary. And the filing cabinet may reveal memoranda that are ambiguous, letters that are contradictory, and whole sheaves of sheer nonsense.

I can give Mr. Gauss an excellent letter of reference to any possible future secretaries. I have never seen him lose his temper, although (since he was a red-headed bantam-weight boxer as a young man) I imagine he has one. His invariable courtesy is of the most durable kind, for it is based on a genuine liking for people. He has a deep interest in most ideas and in most men. Of how many persons could such a statement be made?

Yet he does not give the impression of scattering his fire. He finds relations and relevancies in matters which most of us accept without examination as further bits in the bewildering patchwork of the world. His judgments seem to proceed from a

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central core of conviction and tested thought. This inner stability is so firm that it can afford to dispense with dogmatism, in favor of his characteristic manner of irony, of playful questioning, of tentative meditation, of delicate discrimination. His favorite quotation at one time—Mr. Gauss does not stand still, and it may not be his favorite now— was *La verité est dans la nuance.* One wonders how much he owes to Ernest Renan. He understood fully Renan's recurring phrase, *Pauvre humanité!* and some of his smiling tolerance closely parallels Renan's awareness of human fallibility, his tragic sense of life. If Mr. Gauss prefers *l'esprit de finesse* to *l'esprit géométrique,* it is because he knows men.

As Dean of the College, Mr. Gauss officially encountered undergraduates most frequently when they were in hot water. He seemed to consider it a privilege to deal with the infractors, the rebels, and those ill at ease—as if one could learn as much from the outcasts as from the pillars of society. The Dean's light rein kept order better than moral indignation. His close contact with fairly original sins Mr. Gauss turned to use. He has published some of his findings in *Life in College;* in private he can speculate authoritatively on why the lonely intellectual, lacking athletic and social outlets, is so frequently the malcontent.

Fanaticism and authoritarianism were no parts of his philosophy. When reformers waged a campaign for the throttling of all wailing and blaring campus radios at an early hour in the evening, Mr. Gauss would counter with a little announcement in the *Princetonian* suggesting that discretion was a particular virtue for those who enjoyed "saxophones and other so-called musical instruments." He was known as the Smiling Dean; the door of his office was always open; he never seemed aware of his official position or powers; he assumed that his younger colleagues were his equals and the undergraduates his friends. Perhaps that explains why his seventieth birthday seems a gross overstatement for this young man, a further example that you can prove absurdities with figures.

The people who could not understand Mr. Gauss were the impatient idealist who pay tribute to the worth of the individual just so long as the individual agrees with them. Such angelic creatures could become unangelically annoyed by Mr. Gauss's imperturbability, his air of being always a little tired, or of things being not quite so solemn as we think, his slow appraising drawl, his casual tweeds, his shrewd glance through *pince-nez* from blue eyes set in a head that should be a delight to sculptors, as if in some way delicate philosophy had been stamped on Roman features. And they could interpret this wide awareness as ambiguity or lack of conviction.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The secret of Mr. Gauss's intellectual power is the generalizing from a ranging and close knowledge of particulars. His course in nineteenth-century French literature began with a famous lecture making young Americans aware that back of that literature lay a thousand years of continuous national history, a history that he knew well through the individuals and the particulars that composed it. Yet it was not the nation, let alone the particulars, that he found of significance, but the valid and valuable ideas for living that might be drawn from them. Mr. Gauss should give us from his experience his own matured meditations on history and historiography. His reach toward synthesis is evident in all his thought and actions.

Synthesis of the best and the popular. Why should a dean write articles for the *Saturday Evening Post* or the *Ladies Home Journal?* Because neither the crowds nor the intellectuals can profit from mutual ignorance or contempt. Why should a retired scholar, with a lifetime of work of his own still ahead, accept the arduous duties of national president of Phi Beta Kappa? Because a closer meeting of the best minds and the most minds is still America's need. Let us make the best a little more common, and the common a little better.

Synthesis of the arts. Mr. Gauss headed for a number of years before his retirement a creative arts program at Princeton. Sculpture, painting, music, writing. He

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broke down departmental boundary lines; he made inroads on the idea that education is a passive acquisition of knowledge. He fought against the fantastic fairy stories that fact and value are opposites, that teaching and scholarship, criticism and creation, special and general interests, are incompatible. He will not accept the lazy argument that profundity in one field of study is best shown by lack of interest in all others.

Synthesis of culture and of cultures. In his last years at Princeton he turned from historical courses to advanced seminars in masterpieces. In the great heritage of civilizations, he finds less and less room for parochialism, less time for any sort of limited fanaticisms. What do race, creed or time matter in the search for lasting values that give men more light and bind them together? In terms of Mr. Gauss's own quip, when we call a friend quixotic, we are not accusing him of being un-American. And therefore, on many fronts, Mr. Gauss is pursuing his campaign of internationalism, or to use a better word, of humanism. He is a one man UNESCO, and his standard is humanity.

This sketch might be rounded off with three short postscripts, for Mr. Gauss has made many of his younger friends (how many books have been dedicated to him?) aware of the importance of *le petit fait significatif*. Twenty-five years ago he sent me from the middle of his busy life a letter on my first trip to Europe. It was a long letter, not merely a conventional "Have a good time." Go to the Louvre, he said, and find a certain dreaming head in Greek sculpture; it fascinated me when I was your age. And then he quoted from some Greek poet: "The dead are not dead; they only sleep. Neither do they lack any good thing." Ideas of permanence and proportion are not easily forgotten.

Since this is a miniature rather than a full-length painting, Mrs. Gauss has so far not been mentioned. She has made herself part of her husband's life and his accomplishment. It does not seem to me prejudiced to call her one of the great ladies of America, except that such a phrase might not suggest the warmth and balance of her personality—sympathy and understanding without sentimentality.

I talked with one friend, and checked with another. They agreed that Mr. Gauss's dominating moral trait (there are many anecdotes to support it) is bravery. If intellect is also present, bravery becomes affirmative and constructive. It cannot imply withdrawal, or rejection of life. It knows weakness and evil, but moves toward a better world through possible channels. How rare it is to find a man who dares to practice it fully!

Letter to the Board

The greeting from the SCHOLAR crowd was the cheeringest thing that happened to me on my seventieth birthday. First of all, it was good to see that Reinhold Niebuhr has joined us. I've long felt that some of us need a little more religion and Christian charity. He can also remind us that there is something about finishing up the biblically allotted span of three score years and ten that may well give anyone, and me particularly, the cold shivers. It is now much too late for me to kid myself into believing that I belong to that blessed group whom, according to the Greeks, the gods love. There is also something in Shakespeare about those with the briefer candles and in Wordsworth about those whose hearts are dry as summer dust and burn to the sockets. Your message interrupted my reflections on these matters as I was making up my discouraging inventory. When you hit seventy and remember your more gifted contemporaries, who have left you to join the advance guard, you have to fight against

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self-pity, against the feeling of being lonely, isolated and marooned among the younger crowd. You like to feel that you are less flighty, more discriminating, just because you have lost so much that you once had in common with your kind. I confess to you that, more than anything else, this at times gets me down and throws me for a loss. I've seen too many of my coevals huddle themselves up into their hardening shells, not to know that all this is human. Yet in my better moments, I still know that I should hate most those very forms of self-pride and self-pity which isolationism takes. Philosophically speaking, I'm not naturalist enough to console myself with the thought that all this just comes naturally. For even if it is human, I still know that it is also inhumane.

You of the SCHOLAR are the humanest crowd I know. Since its founding, this common venture of ours has brought me more new and cherished friends than any other activity. From having lived with myself these seventy years, I know I'm pretty hard to get along with. But I want you to know that I'm not as crabbed as I would have been without the normalizing your fellowship has given me. You are good enough to say that you haven't noticed my disqualifications yet. I won't hold this against you now. But I must remind you that our common job calls for perspicacity and judgment, and in the interest of the SCHOLAR I must hope you soon will. When you do, I also hope it will mitigate your annoyance to recall that whatever of youth, tolerance and sociability remains to me I owe to you. So long as I keep your affection and regard, I don't care whom the Greek gods loved. Humanly speaking, you are all much closer to me.

With gratitude and in recognition,
Yours, ever,
Christian Gauss

Another in the series of AMERICAN SCHOLAR PORTRAITS will appear in the Winter 1948-49 number.

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American Scholar Forum . . .

WORLD FEDERATION—

IS IT A PRACTICABLE GOAL?

Yes

Mark Van Doren

Is world federation a practicable goal to aim at now? When the question is put that way I do not see how the answer can be anything but Yes. I have met no one who will disagree. Everyone seems to understand that sooner or later the world will have to govern itself if it wants peace, and everyone supposes that some day it will be sensible enough to do so. The only *goal*, then, is world government.

The question, however, means something else. It means this: Should world federation be asked for, worked for, now? Is nothing else worth talking about? Are there not other things to be done first? Are there not steps to be taken before this final leap is feasible? Does it not in fact prejudice the cause of peace to agitate for something whose failure to materialize will set things back rather than advance them? Is it not dangerous nonsense to demand at this stage what clearly cannot be had?

The question means all that, and by the manner in which it is put suggests its own answer. The answer is that the goal must be forgotten for a while. More history must be permitted to make itself. More evolution must take place. A number of half things, third things, tenth things must be tried in the faith that there is somebody who knows how they will lead to the universally desired result.

My objection to such an answer is in part an objection to the metaphors submerged in it. "Step," "leap," "history," "evolution," "lead to"—those terms are too poetical for me, particularly when I find them in the discourse of men who insist that they are nothing if not practical. I

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think they are not practical if they prefer to wait while history hurts them. Evolution—it is still a magic monster under whose feet we like to throw ourselves. The only step to world government, if steps have to be talked about, is for me the step from here to there. It consists of saying *now* that world government is necessary, and of doing every conceivable thing to get it *now*. If it is truly necessary, and if nothing else is necessary, then it seems to me the merest moonshine to talk of anything else on earth.

This is not to say that I expect world government tomorrow. But the reason is not that I believe it wouldn't work. I believe it is the only thing that will work. The reason is simply that so many think it is for the future, not the present. In the future there will be world government. In the present there can be only diplomacy leading to world government.

But diplomacy will never lead to world government. Who but an idealist could believe it will, who but a dreamer, bemused among the chancelleries, could find comfort in the hope that foreign ministers will learn soon enough to do what foreign ministers have never in history known how to do, namely, see in the dark? In the past, it didn't matter so much that they couldn't. A collision took place, a country rose or fell, an empire withered, but the world somehow survived. The collision was local, and the verdict was merely that Diplomat A had not known after all what Diplomat B meant when he said X. Or perhaps it was that B had been succeeded by C, who represented a new government that wanted to take everything back. In any case the collision occurred, and after a few months or years the dust settled.

But it has ceased to be likely that trouble will ever again be local. Or temporary. The emergency is here, and it is universal. And we are still being asked to watch how clever certain fellows can be. Mr. Churchhill, for instance, holds out this dismal prospect:

> With all consideration of the facts, I believe it right to say today that the best chance of avoiding war is, in accord with other western democracies, to bring matters to a head with the Soviet government and by formal diplomatic processes, with all their privacy and gravity, to arrive at a lasting settlement. There is certainly enough for the interests of all if such a settlement could be reached. Even this method, I must say, however, would not guarantee that war would not come, but I believe it would give the best chance of preventing it, and that if it came we should have the best chance of coming out of it alive.

Mr. Churchill says that, and supposes it will reassure us. Or we are urged to understand that the Marshall Plan, in addition to being of course a worthy enterprise for the physical relief of Europe, for the prevention of starvation and the cure of economic chaos, is in fact a little world government of which the United States is administrator and king. No wonder we have to justify it, on this further level of diplomacy, even to ourselves. Knowing that our intentions are suspect, we are forced to deny that we have any intentions—or else to claim that one country can save the world.

No country can save the world. No country any more can save even itself. The American people have begun to realize this, and to wonder what ought to happen next.

What has to happen next, not merely sometime, is a new foreign policy—everywhere, but certainly and first of all in the United States. That foreign policy will be to end foreign policy as we have hitherto known it. It will be the policy of world government. The first step toward the federation of the world is for the United States government to make known that it desires it. The next step is for this same government to ask other governments whether they desire it also, and to point out that if they do there is something that can be done. The Charter of the United Nations can be amended. The United Nations can call a review conference looking toward at least a consideration of those changes in its nature which, if they were made, would produce a union of nations, not a league. Not an association whose members are sovereign nations which can

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change their minds, but a federation of nations each one of which has surrendered whatever portion of its sovereignty is the portion with which it may commit suicide.

The answer would almost certainly be No if there were any doubt that the question had been put in good faith. Good faith in such a case would consist of meaning no more than that the nations should try to conceive a single government which, if it existed, would contain all their differences—contain them, and preserve them in so far as they are real. Of course they are real. But a series of total wars will render them unreal, will sink them under tyranny or chaos. Only government can save them for the argument they deserve, and for the solutions that may or may not emerge. Only government lets men who do not love one another live.

The answer might still be No. In which case there would be no further step to take for the time being. Talk about world government could go on, but it would be clear that it was impossible now. As matters stand at present, we do not know this, for the question has not been asked, let alone answered. It is obvious enough that no living government wants to give more than it has already given to the United Nations. But it does not follow that a United Nations which had become a world federation would be similarly distrusted. By definition it could scarcely be, since it would have come into existence by the desire and consent of all.

If the answer were Yes, then an indefinite number of steps would lie ahead. The first of these would be the working out of something like a constitution, or at any rate a body of law with instruments to enforce it upon individuals. Not upon nations, for that is war again. But upon men like those who were hanged at Nuremberg after a war—costing millions of lives, trillions of dollars, and perhaps the death of Europe—had breached the wall of sovereignty behind which for six years they were safe. This was an expensive process, which nobody, so far as I can tell, wants to repeat. It will have to be repeated, at unimaginable cost, in the absence of such law as we are now considering. Such law would not be easy to create. It would never be perfect. But the news that it was being pondered in responsible councils is the only news that would let men breathe again. It is the only cure for panic such as now is mutual between Russia and the United States—panic that grows daily, in spite of every attempt to allay it, and certainly means war some time. Atomic war, too. But there is no point in underlining that. The last war was bad enough.

The second step would be the setting up of whatever government emerged from the councils. Not a perfect one, surely, since no such thing will ever exist. But what a thing to have at all! And it can be had at any time it is desired. I desire it now, and many others do. I cannot believe for a split second that men exist who are wise enough to guide our several ships of state through the black seas ahead. "Privacy and gravity," says Mr. Churchhill. What do those melancholy words remind me of? Oh, yes. Andrew Marvell. "The grave's a fine and private place."

The subsequent steps? Who can foresee them? Most of them will probably be dull, as civilization in a sense must always be. Death is not nearly so dull—or danger, or diplomacy. We who do not want to wait any longer than necessary for world government are sometimes called utopian. My own notion is that the term fits better those dreamers who draw comfort from such slogans as "the slow rhythm of history" and "the ultimate funds of common sense which still reside somewhere." How slow are the waves of history? And do no men make them? I quote from an intelligent newspaper, the New York *Herald-Tribune*, whose editors seem to believe that somewhere men still use the heads God gave them. Do they mean somewhere else? Do they mean some other time? The time is now. Not tomorrow. Not ultimately.

"I do not understand," says Robert Hutchins, "the use of the word 'ultimate' in this connection. We have now arrived at the ultimate stage in history. We cannot do something intermediate now and ultimately do something ultimate. What is

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ultimately required of us is required of us now. If what is ultimately required of us is the abolition of war through a world government, then we had better set about trying to get war abolished through world government now."

That, I think, is all there is to say—if one more thing is added. And Mr. Hutchins has said it too:

> Peace and justice stand or fall together. Men will fight until they get their rights. . . . And if we are to have a world government based on justice, we, as the most prosperous and powerful nation of the earth, shall have to give up many economic and political advantages. . . . If we are going to have peace we must pay for it; and the price of peace is justice. If it will cost us a good deal to have world government, it will cost us far more to have war.

No

Walter Lippmann

Mr. Van Doren may be right when he says that the only way to get war *abolished* would be through a government set up by a federation of the world. But it is not, I believe, the way to present or postpone the next few wars. For he is mistaken, I think, in supposing that the world could now be federated and brought under one government without fighting at least one, and more probably a whole series of wars to end all wars. So while I would agree that a world government might abolish war after it had been firmly established, the process of establishing that government firmly enough to abolish war would, I think, be a long and bloody business of subduing and pacifying separatists and rebels all over the globe.

Mr. Van Doren assumes, I take it, that the great contending powers of the world today might be federated by voluntary agreement as were the original thirteen states of the American union. I think the analogy is misleading.

I do not believe that the establishment of our own federal government was truly a rehearsal of the drama that would be enacted if we set out now to establish a federal government of the world. For the United States were never in fact separated. They began as colonies of one empire, and they had from their first beginnings the same allegiance to the British crown. They remained united when they rebelled, and our federal constitution was "a more perfect union" of a union that had always existed since the colonies were settled.

The problem of uniting truly independent states was not posed here, as it was posed almost everywhere else—for example, in the making of the Roman Empire, of the United Kingdom, of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, of Bismarck's Reich. If we are looking for historical analogies which would indicate how a world government could be established, then we had better study these examples. For there the problem of establishing a greater government over originally disunited and truly separate states was actually posed. It was not posed here in 1787.

These analogies indicate that the process of federating discordant states involves a prolonged struggle in which a stronger state gradually succeeds in subduing the resistance of its rivals. I do not see how such a struggle could be avoided if we made the federation of the world the immediate object of our policy. For I assume that it would be at least as difficult to unite in

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one federation Russia, America, Britain and China as it was to unite England, Scotland and Ireland, or Prussia and Bavaria. Does Mr. Van Doren doubt it? Does he think that a *voluntary* federation can be achieved now? If he does not think that the federation can be achieved voluntarily now, then the only way to achieve federation now is by force. Is he prepared to use force to federate the world now?

He says that he is not, that if the nations refuse to federate by persuasion and consent, then talk about world government would go on but it would be clear that it is impossible now. It would not necessarily be so clear to everyone as it would be to Mr. Van Doren. For if once the people here were convinced that there were no solution except world government *now*, they would begin to feel as Mr. Van Doren does, that nothing else is worthwhile, that it is mere foolishness to seek with Russia a diplomatic settlement which might avert a Third World War in this generation. The logic of his argument, and the feeling with which he surrounds his logic, would lead others, though perhaps not him, to the view that a preventive war, a war to end war, a war to federate the world, is the only way to deal with the Russians. For I can assure Mr. Van Doren that under no conceivable conditions will the Soviet Union now enter a federation on conditions acceptable to us, or we a federation acceptable to the Russians.

Therefore, I contend that as an objective of policy now, what he proposes can, if taken seriously, only aggravate the danger of war. And so I would say that while we should go on talking about the idea of a gradual unification of the world, we should most emphatically not now make it an object of foreign policy which calls for a dramatic showdown on a question to which we already know that the answer must be negative.

Replies

Mr. Van Doren

I am glad that Mr. Lippmann's admirable remarks nowhere contain the charge that I propose a war to federate the world. Of course I have no such madness in mind, and I am confident that no person these days who talks preventive war puts world government among its objectives. World government as I described it is as far from what Toynbee calls "the universal state" as peace is from the wilderness which Tacitus made famous.

Mr. Lippmann does charge me, however, with believing what he cannot believe, namely that a voluntary federation of the world is possible now. It is possible if enough people think it is. The thought is entertained at present, I grant, by a very small minority of the world's population—by not too many Americans, and by only a handful of their Congressmen. But this does not mean to me that there is anything else to talk seriously about. Mr. Lippmann himself agrees that a federation is the only way to abolish war. Well, then, let us do all we can to discover whether that way is closed. Mr. Lippmann assures me it is, but I still do not *know* that it is. The question, I repeat, has never been fairly and formally put to those who have the authority to answer it. Meanwhile we continue to "prevent" or "postpone" the "next few wars." A bleak business, from which none

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but a few diplomats can take comfort. No wonder the insides of most young men's minds are so black today. They do not believe that the diplomats will succeed.

We might hope that they do succeed. But if they fail, what then? World War III may very well issue in the universal state whose prospect both Mr. Lippmann and I deplore. Then world government would indeed be impossible, for the power would exist that could prevent it. The power still exists that can create it. This is the power of opinion. It is also the power of governments, no single one of which has yet lost its freedom to consent when opinion is no longer to be ignored.

Doubtless our State Department should continue at the game which so few of us believe it will win. The news that it was doing nothing at all would be still worse than the news we get now. But there could be better news. There could be the announcement that the Department had heard about world government; that it expected the American people to go on educating themselves, and perhaps other peoples, in the idea; that it proposed to educate itself, and possibly other foreign offices, in the same idea; but that meanwhile it was not neglecting its traditional duty, the duty of cajoling the wolf of war away from our very door.

This may seem to be asking for less than I asked for before, but I think it is not. It is asking for the recognition—by those who have a chance to change the world—that the time to begin is now. Mr. Lippmann speaks of dangers. The greatest danger is that the idea of world government will be patronized, and so suppressed. Or postponed. For it will never be suppressed.

Mr. Lippmann

It is evident that Mr. Van Doren and I are unable to disagree enough to make an interesting debate. We are both on the side of the angels. But Mr. Van Doren has grown a pair of wings, whereas, an occasional hop, skip and jump is as far as I get off the ground.

Thus I would certainly not object to educating ourselves and others about World Government—though I would say not only about its advantages, but also about its problems. I am very much for it, and have made a modest contribution of my own in a discussion of the epoch-making precedent of the Nuremburg trials. In that discussion, I tried to point out that they are the most important concrete step ever taken in the development of that world criminal law which will have to exist if a world state is ever to be established. I am also very much in favor of working immediately for the federation of Europe.

So I feel that in Mr. Van Doren's scheme of things I belong in limbo—not quite in the inferno, though not obviously in paradise.

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The Reader Replies . . .

The Reader Replies *regularly carries comments by readers on the contents of the preceding American Scholar Forum. In the Autumn number, for example,* The Reader Replies *will contain letters about the debate in the current number on the subject: "World Federation." In addition, miscellaneous letters of comment on various articles appear in this department. All communications should be addressed to: The Editor,* The American Scholar, *5 East 44 Street, New York 17, N.Y., and should not exceed three hundred words in length. Because of limitations of space, the editors cannot guarantee to print all communications received. Letters intended for publication in the Autumn number should be mailed before July 10. (Editor)*

RADIO IN AMERICA

The Yardstick and the Millennium

The two contestants say many good and true things which, however, seem to me logically subsequent to a fact they neglect to mention. I mean the cultural role of numbers in the twentieth century. This can be simply stated as the replacement of the individual by the mass, and the resulting insignificance of particular judgment, even when uttered by what were formerly impressive groups of individuals. Today no magazine can exist for a mere 5,000 readers, no matter how passionately critical or sacrificially paying they might be. The so-called quality magazines, with 100,000 readers more or less, show a deficit which is made up by the publishing business they are linked with. In publishing, the author with a following of 10,000 is beginning to be a costly luxury, a St. John preaching in the desert, for the book clubs bring down a quarter million or more readers at one throw.

The radio, with its still greater reach, acts in the same culturally determined way. Two million listeners for the Invitation to Learning program, of which Mr. Bryson is chairman, is hardly an audience. "Appeal" begins at eight million, and is an assured fact at ten. This is not solely an advertisers' yardstick; it is a pervasive state of mind. Majorities rule, and on this principle the vaunted Third Program of the BBC has been resented by spokesmen for the other two-thirds.

Mr. Bryson's demand for "criticism" therefore seems to me as futile as Mr. Young's indignation at the failure of the industry to "realize its potentialities." Who would read a critical column on radio? And if it is to be a critical letter by you or me to his company, it will be turned over to Mr. Bryson for reply. In fairness to all, what could he do but send back a reprint of his present article? All talk of potentialities is likewise beside the point. Nothing of any value in our civilization pays its way

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or attracts while alive the mass approval to justify it numerically. Opera, symphonic music, literature, the fine arts, and even science and medicine, live on past charity, on taxes or angels. Which does not mean that we are starved of these good things, for our fundamentally unbusinesslike old culture also produces angels eager to ransom their fall into commerce, and inspires in others less wealthy the will to use public money for elevated purposes.

The prospect for broadcasting would seem plain: sooner or later some fanatical spirit among the leaders of the industry will decide to endow, give or waste time on programs likely to please the absurd handful of millions who have intellectual tastes; or, in a comparable fit of madness, some national agency will subsidize music, or the televising of Old Masters, or adult discourse on other subjects than "whither current events?"

Meanwhile, no doubt, complaints, gibes and boycotts will help create the atmosphere in which those rash steps will be taken. Let us therefore continue to speak as outrageously of broadcasting as it speaks outrageously to us in its top programs. Since we are not paying customers, we have no rights—hence no duty to be civil or show respect for an article we do not purchase. Rather, we can howl with the irresponsibility of paupers until one of the beadles of broadcasting decides to earn fame among the literate by giving them, at enormous cost of money and repentance, a really *sustaining* diet.

Jacques Barzun
Columbia University

The Advertising Agencies and the Public

Let me begin my comment on the radio problem with a brief, doublebarreled confession:

First, I am the owner of nine receiving sets, all in good working order. Over the years I have gradually become so disheartened with what is available on the air that, except for a few minutes of news in the morning, I rarely turn on anything except my FM set. Because I am lucky enough to live in New York, I have a choice of two FM stations whose time is mainly devoted to good music. One of them has no advertising at all; the other has only a minimum, strictly censored to the standards of good taste.

Second, speaking as one who has often listened to British programs for fairly long periods of time, if I had my choice I would take the BBC, with all its imperfections, rather than American commercial radio with all its dizzying, pyrotechnical excellences.

The question remains, of course, whether I represent a tiny minority of fussy highbrows who can safely be ignored. I don't think I do. There is some evidence, indeed, that substantial numbers of persons feel that American radio is going downhill, and that action is urgently needed.

A few years ago, a proposal was made for special broadcasting in New York City. Through a technological process that need not be discussed, it would have been available only to subscribers who paid something like $18 a year. I promptly signed up, and I'm told many others did. The plan was temporarily laid aside, but for reasons which have nothing to do with the response.

Officials of broadcasting networks often talk as though they were responsible for what goes out over the air through their chains. They are not. The greater part of what the public hears is designed, prepared and executed by employees of advertising agencies. The network exerts only a theoretical censorship, usually, I believe, left in abeyance, which at best consists only of a namby-pamby set of rules against vulgarity and the mention by name of a competing network. As private individuals, I am sure that the advertising-agency men have taste and discrimination; but professionally, their job is to sell goods by the most effective available means. If desirable for this purpose, they will cater to the ignorant, not the educated; to the stupid, not the intelligent; to our interest in the trivial, not the important. They fill up the best listening hours, so

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that nearly all the occasional good "sustaining" programs are relegated to unsalable time, or moved back and forth until it is hard to keep track of them.

What would happen to the New York *Times* if it sold each of the eight columns on its front page to a separate advertiser and invited him to publish there each day whatever he wished, to gain maximum readership for that particular column?

Every medium of communication faces the problem whether to give the public what it thinks it wants, or something a little better, or, conceivably, something a little worse than it is willing to admit it desires. There are of course numerous publics, at different levels, and most purveyors of information and entertainment aim at one group, or a few of them. I suggest, however, that the advertising men who now control the radio are aiming at a group decidedly below the level of newspaper readers as a whole; and still farther below the level of magazine readers as a whole. I suggest, further, that even this group is receiving from radio, *on the average*, material which does it little good and quite conceivably does it harm.

In fact, I believe there is a real question whether, because of radio and some other influences which are outside the present discussion, the entire intellectual level of our citizenship is not being pushed downward at a time when the national and international problems by which we are confronted demand all the intelligence, and all the sharpening of that intelligence, that we can get.

For one, I welcome wholeheartedly Dr. Bryson's suggestion for government-owned radio, which would, I assume, appeal to the same level of intelligence, both in information and in certain forms of entertainment, that is represented by the front page of the New York *Times* or *Herald Tribune*. It would cost very little to make the experiment of two or three channels for the dissemination by the Government of reliable news, intelligent discussion, and musical masterpieces. If the advertising men who run private radio are right, they have nothing to fear from such an experiment. If they are wrong, the country, private broadcasting, and millions of listeners have everything to gain from such competition, which would push us toward the side of the good.

Bruce Bliven
40 East 49 Street
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A Few Suggestions

Mr. Bryson has written the most reasonable, plausible defense of American broadcasting that I have seen; and it must be admitted that he writes from a unique position —that of a lifelong intellectual who has been active at the higher levels of radio for at least a decade. Mr. Young's sharp reply aroused many responsive chords, but it might be supplemented by the solid and scintillating barrage of John Crosby's piece in the January *Atlantic*.

As Mr. Bryson makes clear, there is more good stuff on the radio than the highbrow realizes, but one must look around for it. We do not buy or borrow the first book that comes to hand, and we should not expect to be exhilirated at the first random turn of the dial. Yet some of the most irascible private critics of the radio are those who boast that they never listen to it!

However, this is not the time for bouquets, but for a few suggestions. There are big shots and little shots, scattered throughout the radio industry, who grossly underestimate large sections of the American people. They still talk condescendingly about the twelve-year-old I. Q. of the average American without realizing that the I. Q. is no longer the fixed and fatal quantity that it was in the heyday of the over-confident mental testers of the 1920's. Contempt is never a gracious or a fruitful trait, and is certainly not so when it touches an instrument of inestimable power in a democratic society.

In this connection there is a tendency to cultivate a sort of sub-Basic English, a barren and mechanical vocabulary, in order to capture the supposedly moronic masses. Of course, I would not propose substituting long, technical or obscure words, but

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it does seem that the radio might make fuller use of our wonderful language. It does seem that the descendants of Shakespeare's groundlings might appreciate occasionally a richer palette than the broadcasters give them. Emerson once wrote of the courtroom in his day where, "there usually leap out, quite unexpectedly, three or four stubborn words or phrases which are the pith and fate of the business." One could wish that "three or four stubborn words or phrases" would leap out of the loud speaker more frequently.

As for the much bombarded soap operas which we busy males have not the privilege of hearing, I must depend on Mr. Crosby's pithy summary: "the ordinary problems of soap-opera heroines are murder, suicide, illegitimacy, and bankruptcy, none of which a housewife is likely to run up against in a lifetime." But millions of housewives are daily running up against neuroses in their own children without knowing it. What an opportunity for a new kind of radio writer to introduce into those "serial dramas" some of the elements of child psychology. And what a difference this might make in the health of the nation, for the beds in our mental hospitals increasingly outnumber the beds for the physically ill—and there will never be enough child psychologists or psychiatrists to go round. Does physics say anything about saccharin passing over the airways more easily than wisdom?

And now one final burst of naïveté inspired by a friend, who once sat in a radio station in Turkey and saw a violinist give a series of encores which went far beyond his allotted time. What consternation, what horror in the heart of my friend, who only knew the sacred segments of American programming. But his horror at once turned to delight when he found that the station officials were not disturbed; the next program could be shortened—or perhaps lengthened on another night. Of course, "radio time" which is bought and paid for at a high price cannot be treated lightly—and yet a little more flexibility would be refreshing. It would be asking too much to have performers run over their time blithely, in the Turkish fashion; but they might run under it occasionally, and show that they are not slaves of the stop-watch. They might break off a discussion at a lively point instead of dragging it out doggedly to the prescribed second. This might not be "radio," but it would be human.

Houston Peterson
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Critical Glass Houses

As one in on the formation of the University of Chicago Round Table (NBC), Invitation to Learning (CBS), and (with Senator Robert A. Taft) Foundations of Democracy (CBS), I am not likely to join lightly the critics who think that "highbrow" features cannot get an airing, and justify their tenure, on "the chains." Indeed, to criticism itself I learned long ago (hardly more from politics than in lowbrow living) to apply this test of realism: "Could the critic, on any ground disclosed in the criticism and under favorable circumstances, do a better job than the criticized?" So judged, most criticism has to become self-justifying, if justified at all.

No criticism of the American radio which I have seen can meet this simple test and stand justified other than by its own self-voicing. Now Mr. Young has a lovely voice; and his laryngeal "side-swipes" at radio are works of art for their own sakes: they are full of nice sound and sweet sentiment. As to sense, however, change but one phrase in his last sentence, and you get what of substance his whole article says to me: "It is probably a misconception of the nature of *human nature* to expect much more . . . than what we are now receiving."

Nor do I say this of Mr. Young despairingly, nor agree with Mr. Bryson passively. I think Mr. Young dead wrong in his overtones, and Mr. Bryson too cautious in his undertones. My convictions are positive, and my enthusiasm for radio is sweeping. American critics of American radio

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have not, in my opinion, looked to realities, not even to the deeper realities in themselves ("You're all right," said one psychoanalyst to another, "but how am I?"). Like one of O'Henry's heroines, I occasionally get disgusted with, say, the act of eating—in watching other people do it the way they most enjoy. But in general I am not against eating, or unable to command the tolerance to let others do it the way that gives them the greatest pleasure. "There are nine-and-sixty ways. . . ." Some features of radio I like more than others. But just before I insist upon my own dear preferences as standard, I look at me and say: "You're getting too precious for your (human) parentage." The truth is that the chief complaint I have against radio is not against radio at all: I cannot find time to listen to a fraction of the good things on the air.

The range is very wide, and the quality is on the up-and-up. The humor of radio, for instance, is way above the standard brand of most human beings most hours of the day (and night). The charity of utterance, thanks to the exaltation of the air (and to libel laws), is well above the standard brand of daily gossip among the "best people." The level of political reporting and disputing, and of religious sermonizing, is head and shoulders above the standard brand of the one in American legislatures, and of the other in ten thousand pulpits. (Walter Winchell is hardly more high-tensional at the "mike" than President Hutchins at the lectern.) Sportsmanship is high, save among sacerdotal sectarians who watch their own self-interest like a hawk, and upon the slightest excuse demand an eye for an eye and a half-hour for a half-hour. The drama on radio is really dramatic; the music, whether popular or classic, is above a thousand barber shops and a million-and-a-half of American parlors. And the "soap operas" —well, at least they are light and sweet enough "to float," aerially—and that's more than any realist can say about the secret sentiment of most of our feminine-day-shifts and the sensuality of some of the night-shifts of American mankind.

Not "just as good as," but *much better than*—that is almost certainly the comparative line of defense open to a realist who looks at radio even in a meliorizing mood. Add to this (what is admitted) that the technique side has in radio gone way ahead of inventiveness and artistry elsewhere; and you have what only prideful inattentiveness prevents intelligent persons from seeing all the time, admitting at proper times, and enjoying as many times as they can spare. These latter times would be more if preciosity were not afraid of being caught at sharing with the mass of mankind what the mass of mankind always enjoys, and what intellectuals in a democratic society may jolly well afford to enjoy.

T. V. Smith
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Criticizing the Critics

Having listened to, read and, out of my own half-knowledge, generated an appalling amount of criticism of American broadcasting in the past two or three years, I have come to the conclusion that 98 per cent of it lacks either perspective or specificity. Mr. Bryson is right to call us to account.

He is right, too, I think, to repay the satirists in kind by underlining the uninformed but cocksure zeal which somehow makes all reformers sound as fatuous as the uninitiated ladies of the WCTU. He is right about the need for the kind of professional criticism of radio that laymen demand from their newspapers and magazines, as a matter of course, in literature, drama, music and art. And he is definitely right about its being time for the highbrows either to coalesce into a recognizable audience, prepared to fight for reasonable concessions from the broadcasters, or retire to their books and magazines.

(There remains, however . . . as I do not understand Mr. Bryson to question . . . the broadcaster's duty to anticipate and, on occasion, ignore even the qualified professional critic. If the publishers, the

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producers, the conductors and the art dealers had not had this measure of both courage and venturesomeness, we should never have had a Tom Wolfe, a Eugene O'Neill, a Stravinsky or a Picasso.)

But let us remember that there are practical limits to what we may expect from a maximal concentrated impact of the so-called intellectuals upon the broadcasters. The New York *Times*'s WQXR, generally regarded as a model highbrow station, is not going to throw out its commercials, any more than the parent newspaper is going to throw out sports and society chitchat. How can they? It costs money to broadcast, and you and I contribute none of it.

We intellectuals may as well get it through our heads that we are not ever going to get the radio equivalent of a *Harpers* or a *Foreign Affairs* or an AMERICAN SCHOLAR as a supplement to the common denominator package. We can have them, but only on the terms that apply in the print media: by supporting highly specialized broadcasting plants either on the basis of a few relatively painless (and not very profitable) commercials plus some subsidy, or on the basis of no commercials, all subsidy. The fortunes of William Benton's Subscription Radio idea would seem to indicate that this (Benton required no listener-initiative, just $2 a month) is asking too much of intellectuals.

Mr. Young's presentation leaves me with a depressed feeling that I have heard it all before . . . the maiden's scream, the villain's sneering "he who controls the pocketbook controls the man," the thundering hooves of the FCC . . . everything, as pat as *Uncle Tom's Cabin;* and just about as close to the facts.

For the sake of hardheaded reorientation, I can report on a few recent soundings. The men who wrote the unenforced (and unenforceable) Blue Book have left or are leaving the FCC. I believe it is fair to say that the mood of the present Commission is conditioned by a growing realization that we shall all live to see broadcasting stations outnumber newspapers; and that, because of facsimile and television, the proponents of tighter government regulation of communication can no longer postpone the choice between moving boldly against the lords of the press or executing a strategic retirement from the Blue Book line. For the tide is surely running against the social planners who thought they saw in an historic accident an opportunity to attack not only the First Amendment, but the very concept of individual responsibility in a free society. Indeed, it begins to look as though the broadcasters were not, after all, going to be drafted to plug the gap in our cultural front line from which the educators were driven by the first onslaught of twentieth-century materialism.

And that leads me to my chief criticism of the critics. Is not communication an indivisible task to be shared by parents, teachers, professors, preachers and, in the last analysis, all of us? And if that is so, should we not now pause, somewhat belatedly, to assess and integrate the various roles? Who really knows what specific mission would in fairness be assigned to radio?

My point is that I believe we now have approximately the radio fare we deserve.

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Radio and Education

What distresses me most in the FORUM on Radio in America is that neither Mr. Bryson nor Mr. Young directly adverts to our colleges and universities for amelioration. Surely "the ignorance and indifference of the cultivated minority" must be met there. First, of course, it will be necessary to clarify the position of radio in higher education. Many educators still look upon whatever radio is taught in their institutions as a vocational encroachment merely to be tolerated. This view seems to be in the background of Mr. Young's startling comparison between ignorance in radio and ignorance of the technique of printing.

But fundamentally radio is a communication art: a Caxton is needed, not a mere printer. We shall never have the cultivated and discriminating audience for good

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broadcasting, nor develop the valid criticism Mr. Bryson desiderates, it seems to me, until radio scripts become as much a part of college courses as the novel, the short story, and the drama. Collegians can appreciate the latter three because they have been taught the techniques, perhaps have even tried to communicate their own ideas through those genres.

Radio, as I see it, is not a "combination of new arts" so much as a new combination of old arts. Therefore canons of criticism are ready at hand, merely waiting adaptation to radio, as they were historically adapted to the novel and the short story when those genres emerged.

There is already a surprising amount of fairly competent criticism of radio programs in the review columns of trade papers. To bring such reviews before the cultivated public is difficult, to be sure, but not impossible. And the competent reviewer for that public can eventually, we hope, share the professional immunity of his confrere on the trade press.

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MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

American Foreign Policy

Concerning the debate (if such wide agreement can be called debate) between Vera Micheles Dean and Saul K. Padover: I am positively distressed that you could permit such gross errors as appeared in Mrs. Dean's first statement to appear without editorial disassociation from them. Mrs. Dean writes:

> The work of UNRRA which, in spite of diverse criticisms, performed an excellent job in effecting relief and reconstruction without political discrimination, was terminated in 1946 at the insistence of the United States. . . . The termination of UNRRA's activities in June, 1947, proved a serious blow for a number of countries, notably in Eastern Europe. Relief credits since granted by the United States have been allotted only to countries regarded as "friendly"—that is, with political consideration in mind.

Aside from the sloppy writing, which gives two different dates for the termination, Mrs. Dean does a grave injustice to the United States through failure to cite its reasons for refusing further participation in the work of UNRRA. Mrs. Dean does not say, though she must know, that Russia refused to supply food for distribution through UNRRA. Yet at the very time when Russia herself was a recipient of UNRRA supplies she was sending (in most cases selling) hundreds of thousands of tons of grain to other countries of Europe—France, Finland, Poland and Czechoslovakia among them. In no case did she send any grain to countries either not under her control or in which she sought no political advantage. The uses to which American and British food and materials were put by the Communists for political advantage are a scandalous chapter in the history of human relief. To lay the blame upon the United States for refusing to go along in this is an outrageous distortion, and to fail to give the reasons of the United States is very poor scholarship. And doesn't Mrs. Dean know that even after UNRRA, the United States sent grain to Rumania, which is hardly regarded as friendly?

There are several such distortions in the article, which constitutes a general attack upon the United States Foreign policy. I cite one other instance:

> The reluctance of the United States to include the [atomic] bomb among the armaments which the United Nations has undertaken to reduce has caused some surprise in countries other than Russia.

Here Mrs. Dean is guilty of asking the United States to depart from a plain injunction of the United Nations Assembly in re-

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gard to the atomic bomb. Russia wants the United States to transfer discussions of the atomic question to the Commission on Conventional Armaments. This would undo the work of the Atomic Energy Commission, and tangle up the work of the Conventional Commission. Nowhere does Mrs. Dean say that ten countries are in agreement on proposals for dealing with the atomic bomb, while only Russia and Poland are opposed.

It is a great pity that such mischievous thinking, if it can be called that, should gain currency in a magazine that pretends to speak for the American scholar.

Leo L. Livingston
"Redrock"
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Saul K. Padover's article, "The American Century," and Vera Micheles Dean's article, "U. S. Foreign Policy in the Atomic Age," together outline comprehensively the growth of U.S. influence in world affairs, and clearly state the situation as it exists today. Both urge closer cooperation with Russia by such policies as aiding Russian satellite nations, as well as Germany and the European democracies, through the medium of the United Nations. They also indicate that the United States should set a better example of democracy at home.

It is true that at the present time, as Mr. Padover states, "American democracy is not an easily salable article in foreign markets." The United States can improve upon its present representative form of democracy. Corrupt machine politics, linked with short-sighted, financial, selfish interest—pressure groups—can be replaced by representatives of the people who will enact and administer laws for the benefit of the majority. Instead of being influenced by pressure groups, congressmen and government officials could act in their various capacities as public servants according to the will of the majority of the citizens if they had a way of knowing what the will of the majority was. The results of official, government public opinion polls, in which all citizens could participate, would be a sound basis for democratic government. The people of the world and the United States need assurance that this government shall be "of the people, by the people, for the people."

The desire of the United States to be friendly to the U.S.S.R. is frustrated by the antagonistic foreign policies of the governments of both countries because of the differences in their economic and social ideologies. The United Nations, the only link remaining between these nations, is so constituted that it cannot protect either in case the cold war now in progress becomes hot. One of the greatest minds today, Albert Einstein, has this to say:

> I am in favor of inviting the Russians to join a world government authorized to provide security, and if they are unwilling to join, to proceed to establish supranational security without them.

The organization of such a world government, or a world federation, is the only way to avert the atomic and biological war which is daily becoming more threatening. This is no time for quibbling. The world needs quick, decisive action. Let us not, like Nero, who fiddled while Rome burned, hesitate, and find the civilized world, including us, burned, the progress gained thus far lost forever.

If the United States joined a world government or federation capable of enforcing peace, it would be one nation among many, even though the burden of world rehabilitation would have to be carried by it then, as it is now. The constitution of such a federation would not be a better basis for world government than would the Constitution of the United States. For these reasons, a world federation built upon the present federation of the United States as a nucleus, is the logical course for the nations of the world to take to build an integrated, powerful force for the preservation of world security and happiness.

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I should like to protest against the one-sided manner in which the FORUM on American foreign policy in the Winter number

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of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR was conducted. A forum presumably presents at least two sides of a controversial issue, but as Mr. Padover points out, there is no essential difference between his position and that of Mrs. Dean. Both speak for a policy of appeasement of the Soviet Union, and anyone familiar with their writings would have known in advance that they would substantially agree. The policy they advocate, of course, is entitled to a hearing, but should not the policy they criticize—the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan also receive a hearing? I doubt whether replies from readers can redress the balance.

It seems to me that it would be much more instructive for the readers of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR to print a serious exchange between competent representatives of *both* sides of a controversial issue—and surely, American foreign policy is a controversial issue!—than to present pieces by two contributors who are eloquent and outspoken partisans of only one side. It would not be difficult to drive a team of oxen through the holes in their argument. If the editor can think of no one who can do it I should be happy to suggest a half dozen distinguished scholars on foreign affairs who can—e. g., William Henry Chamberlain, Ann O'Hare McCormack, Louis Fischer, James Burnham, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Calvin B. Hoover.

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I respectfully submit the following comment on the statement made by Paul M. Sweezy in the Spring issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR:

People who love freedom and believe in democratic institutions are prone to think that freedom and democracy will prevail of their own inherent strength and that no great need exists to challenge attacks upon them. This belief is sheer folly, and for this reason the statements made by Paul M. Sweezy in the Spring issue need to be examined.

Mr. Sweezy says that the United States is everywhere backing a system that has already failed. The system in question is private capitalism, whereas the system that has succeeded and should be supported is socialism, and that the way to secure its diffusion is to cooperate with the Communists, who apparently are only socialists in disguise. He asserts that capitalism can be maintained only by fascist methods and implies that those who support capitalism are Hitlerites.

This is quite a large order, and like all unsupported affirmations, it requires more space to analyze and evaluate such a statement than to make it. Yet a few facts may be noted within brief scope. The United States has been and still is devoted to individual enterprise. It is the best example in all the world of the system that Mr. Sweezy hates. But here in America there is greater intellectual and personal freedom, greater opportunity for each individual, greater diffusion of material comforts, greater security, and a greater will for peace and justice for all mankind than has ever existed in like proportions in the world before. Wherever freedom exists, American freedom and democracy are admired.

If anyone wishes to believe that the Communist police state, where the minds and bodies of the people are regimented more ruthlessly even than they were in Germany, Italy and Japan, is devoted to peace, humanity and civilized progress, and that the United States should assist its program and follow its example in America, he is welcome to such belief. The rest of us have a right to believe in human freedom, in democratic institutions, in the honesty and integrity of the American government in projecting a foreign policy designed to sustain freedom where it exists and to liberate people from Communist tyranny.

Ruhl J. Bartlett
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Portrait of John Dewey

I read with much interest, though disagreement, Professor Hook's PORTRAIT of John Dewey in the Winter, 1947-48,

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AMERICAN SCHOLAR. Rereading it left me with no less disagreement, but with a feeling of distaste which I have been seeking to analyze. It is a disarming piece but I fear that this very disarming quality reveals a disingenuousness scarcely worthy of a tribute to a venerable and outstanding figure in the American intellectual world. It does not do, I think, to present a man as a lifelong battler for truth and righteousness, only to belittle all possible opponents and make them unworthy of his assaults.

I was further disturbed, in reading and rereading Mr. Hook's piece, at his extraordinary expressions of piety. Granted, this is a question of taste, but Dewey would insist (if I understand him at all) that matters of taste are not beyond dispute. "He is a sage because of his wisdom, not because of his age" has a nice internal rhyme, but is tautological in form and controversial in content. Similarly, statements concerning a man's joy in "what is struggling to be born," are better reserved for the departed, and until they have been departed long enough for us to be sure that they knew just what it was that was struggling to be born and did not confuse it with what was dying. Again, is it not time that we become fed up with the praise of "great men" as being *really, underneath, to those that really know them,* actually quite human—full of "intellectual humility," and "self-effacement," distrusting "pat answers," "being a keen listener," having an "essential courtesy to others," and "respect for the dignity of the person." The continual reiteration of such traits (and what man does not have them in a eulogy?) gives a sophomoric touch where it certainly does not belong.

But more important than these questions of tone and taste is the way in which Dewey's general philosophical position is stated and defended. Mr. Hook leaves no room for argument—either Dewey or "totalitarianism" is the formula used. Be for Dewey or for Rome or Moscow! Still worse than this kind of judgment is the indirection with which it is expressed, as in the following: "The nearest I have ever heard him come to calling a man downright stupid was his reference to a professional dogooder who couldn't tell a Communist from a democrat, as 'not very discriminating.'" Need it be argued that this is not an adequate answer to the question of communism and democracy? Similarly, Hook asks: "Why is he hated so wholeheartedly by clerical authoritarians, by Fascists, Nazis and Communists?" But do these all hate him with comparable fervor, and if so, do they do it for reasons that can in any way be equated? The first needs factual evidence, the second considerable analysis, neither of which Hook presents.

Neither is Mr. Hook thoroughly candid in his treatment of the technical criticism of Dewey's philosophy among the professional philosophers. It is naïve to dismiss their criticisms on the grounds that they cannot understand him while "the non-philosophic public of professionals" does. One could retort with equal validity, on the face of it, that the non-philosophers like Dewey because they don't really understand him. Take, for example, the doctrine that Hook says is the conclusion of Dewey's theory of experience: "Everything experienced is in part made what it is because there enters into it a way of experiencing something." For philosophers this statement is not as patently clear as Hook makes it out to be. Certainly Berkeley and Hume held to something very much like this, while Kant held precisely this. The point is, it is not only subject to controversy but has been subjected to much criticism by such thinkers as the late Morris R. Cohen, Roy Wood Sellars, Arthur Murphy, Hans Reichenbach, and many others who, along with Marxists, feel an essentially subjectivist and idealist tendency in Dewey's whole thought. To ignore this large body of criticism, especially on the part of one who is as familiar with it as Professor Hook, is to play the demagogue as well as to border on intellectual dishonesty.

Finally, Hook's tribute to Dewey itself rests on an intense political partisanship manifested by snide remarks on one hand and curious omissions on the other. Has the American intellectual public not learned enough through the disasters of the past decade to avoid that glib linking together

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without analysis of "the College of Cardinals or the Communist Politbureau"; "Feuerbach, Marx, Heidegger and the French existentialists" (Heidegger became an ardent Nazi); "Franco's and Stalin's [ideals]"? Is this the scientific method or is it the new obscurantism? And is hating and attacking the Soviet Union, before, during, and since the war, the hallmark of intellectual honesty, courage and liberalism? It is not that there is no room for many different opinions on these questions. My objection to Hook's piece is based on his failure to meet any of these issues and his glib assumption that not to be with him in adulation of John Dewey is to be a supernaturalist or a Communist.

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A Plea for Independent Thinking

The question of an enlightened public opinion will be as pertinent in 1948 as it was in 1947. There has been an increasing need for an analytical approach to all national and international problems—social, economic, political and legal. There has become evident an inordinate lack of respect for the other point of view. There has been a strong tendency on the part of the general public as well as some of the members of the "intelligentsia" to become mentally lazy; seemingly, they are allowing the experts to do their individual thinking for them.

Enlightened public opinion would cause individuals to realize how inconsistent talk of a future war is with the actual lack of economic resources with which to wage an extensive war. Diplomatic bluff is not a component of world peace. People would realize that certain economic, social and political ties exist between governments, and that such ties *per se* determine the policy in many spheres. In placing too much reliance on the newspaper columnist whom he has followed faithfully every evening for ten years, in depending upon the unctuously voiced radio commentator to "solve" the European and Asiatic problems, the average citizen has kept himself in the dark as to basic facts. This self-induced ignorance of the issues in a constantly changing world may be either intentional or unintentional.

Those persons who examine both sides of an issue before venturing even a qualified opinion are rare. When they are found and have the courage of their convictions to speak out, they are readily called apologists and radicals. Their economic security can be effectively threatened or removed for their audacity to state views contrary to the generally accepted ideas of the majority.

During the past year I have had opportunities, in connection with my newspaper work, to converse with persons closely associated with international students' affairs, as well as with organizations endeavoring to explain the need for the success of the United Nations. With regard to the students' groups I was amazed, on the one hand, by the political naïveté revealed. This naïveté concerning American and international politics has resulted in the formation of the opinion that "politics" is to be eschewed as something extremely contaminating. Usually my interviewees failed to conceive political theory as anything more than philosophical abstraction; they could not see the relationship of "politics" to the economic, social and legal forces of a society. Regardless of the fact that they were ignorant of the basic facts of American society, they were intent on "solving" Europe's problems on the student level. Unfortunately, I was forced to conclude that some of our youths are as irrational about the retention of preconceived ideas as members of the older generation; they know the other fellow is all "wrong" but cannot quite state the basis for such reasoning.

On the other hand, I was agreeably surprised to discover at times a thorough working knowledge of international power politics and nuances, as well as the status of the average inhabitant of a foreign country. Happily enough, such a knowledge is a definite asset to those students whose past experiences in resolving controversial issues thoroughly qualify them to act as messengers of good will with foreign students.

What conceivably may be the result of

(*Continued on page 381*)

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UNDER WHATEVER SKY

Irwin Edman

How Is Everything?

In the middle of a busy day when a good many minor things had gone mildly wrong, I ran into someone I had known long and casually who hailed me with a revolting cheerfulness by asking gaily: "Well, how is everything?" The very tone of the inquiry intimated his expectation that "everything" was just fine and dandy, or that I would at the very least briefly declare that it was. Franklin P. Adams once defined a bore as one who, when you asked him how he felt, told you, in detail.

The omnipresent intrusion of the radio has perhaps taught us to listen to words and to discount their meaning. Even apart from radio, social life is marked by the use of conventional inquiries to which purely nominal replies are expected. My questioner certainly did not really want to know how *everything* was, either in the state of the world in general or in my own life. I was tempted, like the Ancient Mariner, to fix and hold him, and for once in a way start in at least to tell him how everything was so far as I knew, from Atomic Energy and the Russians to the momentary mood of my own psyche in the singularly lucid nightmare I had had in the way of a dream the night before.

As it was, I felt impelled at least to give a rational though brief answer. I explained that as to how everything was, the bleak truth was that some things were good and some things were bad, and that roughly speaking and in a necessarily hasty attempt to summarize the whole situation, everything was on the whole, if not fine and dandy, not quite unbearable. I had not given up in despair as to the future of civilization, nor on more personal grounds had I been tempted to throw myself from a high place, turn on the gas, plunge into the Hudson, imprison myself in a closed car and perish from carbon monoxide. "Oh, I guess everything's fine and dandy," I found myself reluctantly admitting.

My questioner knew that was not so, and I do not think cared very much; and I knew it was not so, and did not scruple about lying. Routine social conversation oscillates between the false and the meaningless. That alone is not so fine, but, for the sake of brevity, everything else is.

The Victim of Propaganda

Like everybody else, I have been increasingly impressed by the fact that so much of what we read about public affairs, or even affairs that are relatively less public, is propaganda. By this time it is almost impossible to read a headline about Russia, Palestine, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, not to add Guatemala, Ecuador and Heligoland, without wondering who has wished to say what why. A century ago liberal thinkers regarded the press as a great instrument of democratic education; and newspaper publishers, addressing dinners of the NAM today, still repeat these pious optimisms. But we have been informed, perhaps over-informed, that practically everything is propaganda. The other night over the radio I heard what years ago I might have thought was an innocent weather report. The announcer said that a depression had settled over Iceland and was moving slowly south. A canard, probably put out by Moscow, which is notoriously interested in seeing chaos and anarchy in the western world.

Most of us, I think, rather smugly feel that if there is propaganda in any alleged news item or even in some meditative nostalgic reminiscence by Sir Osbert Sitwell, we are so alert and alerted that we can recognize it. I myself have the comfortable conviction that by careful and sophisticated reading, and by a nice and expert discounting of obvious propaganda, I can get the substantial truth about Russia,

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Palestine, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Guatemala, Ecuador and Heligoland. It is a little bit as if all the talk about propaganda had proved a self-corrective for distortion, so that one is about where one was. The propagandists have overdone it so much that the fairly intelligent reader feels that by taking a little trouble he can get at the facts pretty well, even now. He feels he has learned to translate double-talk into single-mindedness, and knows on the whole exactly what everybody means, no matter what he says. It is the same technique that people pride themselves on mastering when with a smattering of psychoanalysis they manage to pay no attention to the surface meaning of what people say, but substitute complete awareness of what they know, in the now-obvious recesses of their subconscious, people really mean. Fooled by propaganda? Indeed! What! *Me?*

Progress

I am aware of course that progress is no longer fashionable. I do not mean that people have given up wishing for improvement, but the belief that there is any genuine improvement in the world to look forward to has been gradually collapsing (as the well-informed readers of this journal know or should know) since the eighteenth century. Yet, in our private worlds, how we continue to believe about certain particular things that everything is getting better and better, and how we look with un-nostalgic disdain on our former estimation of goods and perfections.

These reflections on the theory of progress are brought to my mind by the fact that I am now the happy possessor of what I regard as the last word in musical reproduction. I am the owner of an instrument, whose name I shall provide on request, which is happily in and not out of this world. I am, of course, convinced that all previous musical reproduction is practically in the paleolithic stage. What is more, I recall how I have felt this each time I have had the privilege of listening to a somewhat better machine—since the days when I first heard the sort of instrument that is still pictured in the advertisements—that representing an astonished and faithful dog listening to his master's voice coming out of a horn.

There was a succession of improvements: the conical horn, and then the horn put in a box (but it sounded, so we told ourselves, ever so much better); then there was the age of improved "acoustical" reproduction; then the major revolution of electrical reproduction (so that within a year everybody who merely owned an acoustical phonograph was regarded as living in the Tobacco Road of music), and now this transcended perfection—which, as I explained to a friend the other day, makes the music sound really better than it is when heard in the concert hall, and glorifies it in a way that the actual performance could not possibly do. It is all nonsense, this modern fashion to disbelieve in progress. Things, at any rate, are getting better and better—even if their owners are not.

The Frontiers of Credulity

During weeks of a varying succession of sleet, snow, rain, it seems almost impossible to believe that it will ever be green and warm again. It is no use having somebody trot out the familiar "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" The fact is that one is quite certain it can be very far behind indeed; there are damp, penetrating, desperate undertaker-days when one is sure spring will never catch up at all.

Now to the rational mind, of course, this is absurd. There have been bad winters before, and it is perfectly patent after a moment's reflection that the probability that spring, and even summer, will come, is so great that even a chastened weather bureau would call it a certainty. The fact is that what is difficult is not intellectual assent but pictorial imagination. It is discouraging to think that there will be a certain low point of morale every winter when the conviction of an eventual summer seems quite impossible, and strain as one will, one cannot see imminent Falstaff's babble of green fields.

Unfortunately, this is true not only about the physical weather, but the moral and political weather of the world. In this

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"winter of our discontent" through which we are living, in the sleet, the hail, the rain and the intense cold of postwar confusion and disillusion, it is also impossible to believe that there will be a springtide in the affairs of men, or ever a full and radiant summer. It is no use, again, for the rational mind to remind itself that scientific method and democracy are both very young, and that in the long run, given a chance, they will come to united triumph.

The tired liberal is a familiar phenomenon. He was present after the last war, and his fears and wariness then seem to have been justified. It is not that the liberal mind is crushed, but that the liberal imagination is flattened out. It takes almost impossible effort these days even to imagine a world at peace. It is even more difficult to imagine a world in anything better than the uneasy equilibrium of tensions ready to snap.

It has become the fashion to smile a little at romantic hopes for the world, or Utopias of a perfect society. But it could be that it is precisely such dreams and visions that are needed to rekindle the fagged enthusiasms of man. It is hard to believe, but it is even harder to see, and a few poets and prophets helping us to see would fortify our belief that in the moral and political world too, however severe the winter, some spring, however late, will come.

On Watching the Self

A little while ago, during an attack of the grippe, I was given by my doctor a mild sleeping tablet which he had prescribed in answer to my complaint that a cough kept me restlessly awake. He was quite enthusiastic about the merits of the medicament; he said that its great virtue was that it acted within ten minutes, and that some of his patients had to be careful to be in bed before they took it, because otherwise they fell asleep before they got into bed. My excellent physician, I am afraid, defeated his own ends. His description of the prompt power of his soporific was a challenge to me. I kept myself awake watching very carefully whether this really would work in ten minutes or not, and I kept myself awake nearly an hour and a half. To the writer of little moral essays such as these, everything becomes a parable. I could not resist keeping myself awake longer by deciding that it was the role of self-awareness, this watching of the self and what happens to it, that is one of the great distractions, interruptions and, if the phrase be not too strong, curses of the modern world. Some people call it subjectivism, some Existentialism—but whatever it is, it is hard to get over it. One watches oneself go to sleep, and thus one does not go to sleep; one watches oneself fall in love, and thus one does not fall in love; one watches oneself writing a paragraph like this, and thus one comes to end it.

Compulsion

Late the other night for no reason at all the line came into my head ". . .a traffic snarl grows worse and worse. . ." and apparently inevitably the rhyme "hearse" sprang to mind. I had not been thinking about the traffic problem at all, nor had I any ambition to write a treatise or even a verse on the subject. Yet I found myself composing a verse—to the extent of twenty lines. I do not for a moment pretend that this throws a profound light on the creative process in general, though I suspect more serious poems perhaps got their start in something like the same accidental compulsion of a rhyme.

Our bonds and our necessities turn out often unexpectedly to be our avenues and opportunities. Looking back, we say, "Except for having had to do this, I should never have thought of doing that." An act of creation, even a small act of creation, is a kind of opportunism on a transcendental scale. It is often turning an inconvenience into an occasion, or a persistent inner gnawing and compulsion into what once in a way turns out to seem a felicitous act of creation. All this, pursued far enough, would take us straight into the whole classic controversy of freedom and determinism. The rhyming of "worse" and "hearse" hardly seems like an adequate introduction to such a profound theme,

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but it is an introduction, and only the limits of space prevent me from developing the theme on a grandiose scale.

The Unendurable Sin

Once when I was eighteen, I complained to a wise elderly friend, aged thirty, that somebody we both knew was an unspeakable bore. He looked at me from the vantage ground of his years, and said knowingly: "By the time you are thirty you will be very grateful if people are no worse than bores." Sometimes now, when I read eloquent passages about the love of all mankind and compassion for everyone, I feel if I put my heart to it, I could do fairly well with and toward most people; but I cannot help feeling that even the Saints in Heaven must, if they are quite honest with themselves—and of course they would be—confess to a mite of irritation at some of their more long-winded colleagues. It is possible to suffer even fools gladly, but it is not possible to suffer gladly in the presence of a bore. There is a story told of a Chinese sage, bedridden with an incurable illness, who was visited every afternoon at great length by a well-intentioned but extremely dull friend. One afternoon, unable to bear the ennui any longer, the Chinese sage, famous for his exquisite courtesy, said quietly: "Will you excuse me for a moment while I turn to the wall and draw my last breath?"

These memories and meditations came into my mind because yesterday I had what seemed for the time being just such a major calamity. I was riding a bus, and I saw coming down the aisle a heavy-set but, as I knew from many years' experience, a stolidly voluble man, an acquaintance of my family's whom I remembered from my own adolescence. I had scarcely ever been able to answer even civil questions of his with anything better than clearly petulant civility. Now here he was coming down the aisle, and unmistakably recognizing me. The seat beside me was empty. A moment later he was in it.

I had been lecturing that morning on the religious ideal of saintliness, and I had been quite eloquent on the theme of compassion for *all* mankind. I was glad there was none of my students on the bus. Things turned out just as I expected: How was my mother; how was my brother; how was my sister; how was I? Was so-and-so still alive, and was it not too bad about this and that one's death? By the twenty-fifth question, there lay below my brief replies a mounting urge toward murder, or just to change my seat.

There is obviously something missing in any possible plan for perpetual peace so long as this sort of bore and this sort of response to boredom goes on in the world. I hear somebody whisper: "Well, how about tolerance, if not compassion?" But that is precisely the difficulty. My own threshold of pain—and, I suspect, that of a good many of my readers—is particularly low when it comes to boredom. My own reserves of tolerance on this head are rapidly exhausted. No civil rights commission is ever going to convince me that bores—not a minority, by the way—have equal rights with everyone else. Some of the classic saints apparently did not really mind bores. They felt sometimes, if it is not too irreverent to suggest it, a real kinship with them.

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The Revolving Bookstand

In Autobiographical Vein

Richard McLaughlin

The Innocent Eye, by Herbert Read. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1947. $3.50.
Appreciation: Painting, Poetry & Prose, by Leo Stein. New York: Crown Publishers. 1947. $2.50.
The Journals of André Gide, Vol. 1: 1889-1913. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1947. $5.00. Translated from the French by Justin O'Brien.
The Journals of André Gide, Vol. 2: 1914-1927. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1948. $5.00. Translated from the French by Justin O'Brien.
The Day Is Gone, by Alyse Gregory. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1948. $3.00.
The Hunters and the Hunted, by Sacheverell Sitwell. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1948. $4.00.

Despite Henry James's warnings against the "terrible fluidity of self-revelation," writers continue to write about themselves. These past twelve months have seen published at least a half-dozen books in autobiographical vein that are worthy of our attention for the fine quality of the writing alone. It is enough to make us wish to congratulate, instead of reproach, those who turn a deaf ear to the master's alarms. Whether a memoir is drawn from a memory "marvelously treacherous," like that of Montaigne, or it reflects a facile exercise in mnemonics, we agree with Alyse Gregory, who, in her enchanting volume of reminiscences *The Day Is Gone*, says "all lives, whatever they may be, and however imperfectly revealed, are unique, and for this reason of interest to others."

•RICHARD McLAUGHLIN, author, critic and lecturer, is a regular contributor to the *Saturday Review of Literature*. His articles and profiles have appeared in such publications here and abroad as the New York *Times*, the *Nation*, *Tomorrow*, the *Fortnightly*, the *New English Review*, *Time and Tide*, *Art and Industry*, *World Review* and *John O'London's Weekly*.

Reviewing the personal records here, we not only find the full personalities of the writers revealed to us, but perceive a quality that all five autobiographers have in common. It is almost as if this collection of memoirs presented a series of variations on a single theme. For as different, as distinctly individualistic, as each writer in the group is, he has never failed to take an uncompromising stand on the liberty and singularity of the intellect. Integrity is a virtue that all of them have succeeded in finding and holding onto throughout their pursuits in life.

Herbert Read has found it in the "virgin sensibility" with which he has tasted every experience. Leo Stein never lost touch with it in a lifetime devoted to critical "appreciation" of the arts and the extreme importance of "exact thinking." Andre Gide's integrity can be identified with his untiring interest in the Hamletian debate in every individual, and the emphasis he has always put on self-realization, transferring for example his own conflict with puritanism from the personal to the aesthetic plane. Alyse Gregory, believing as Descartes, that everyone should at least once in his career question every social custom, law and moral code, has faced life realistically and discovered its deepest currents in the "side shows" she stopped to examine in her travels; while Sacheverell Sitwell has spent his whole life painstakingly seeking out the beauties and rarities in a highly cultivated private world accessible but to a few privileged eclectics. Observing the graceful style in the writing, the persuasive ideas, the evidence of minds lending themselves to lofty contemplation at one point and struggling with universal uncertainties the next,

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we come away from these autobiographical pieces with the satisfaction of having met five unusually well-integrated persons and, needless to say, of having listened to five most stimulating and independent thinkers.

Herbert Read, friend of many a novice and struggling writer, is one personality in the English literary world who defies classification. He is perhaps of too fertile an imagination and blessed with too remarkable a versatility and too broad interests, to be constrained within the categories of any single field of art. Poet, critic and philosopher, Read has excelled in every form in which he has chosen to express himself, and it is not surprising to discover that his own personal record, *The Innocent Eye*, is both a fine example of the best in modern English prose and an inspiring testament of a man to whom life is always an exciting adventure.

During the war there was a small Swiss-Italian restaurant off Tottenham Court Road in London to which many of us would flock. Here, nearly any afternoon, Herbert Read, a tall gray-haired man with a long sensitive face, could be seen seated at a corner table, talking to some aspiring young author. Eagerness or enthusiasm would sometimes light up his tired features as his young companion offered perhaps a salient comment on the manuscript spread out before them.

It is this quality that continually impresses one with Herbert Read. Here was a man who was always ready to listen to the young, never ceased to be amused, curious and often ardent about what they had to say. Later, meeting him in the publishing offices of George Routledge Sons, Ltd., in Carter Lane, which had barely survived the blitz, I was more than ever impressed by his quiet, dignified manner and his graciousness. I came away with the feeling that such patience with strangers intruding on his busy working hours was characteristic of the man.

Read's curiosity about people would continue to drag him away from his desk every time. It is this insatiable curiosity about life which gives to his prose an elasticity, warmth and even, at times, a childlike

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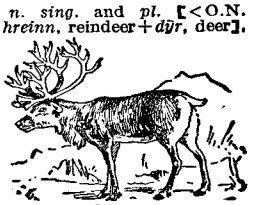
rein-deer (rān'dēr"), *n. sing.* and *pl.* [<O.N. *hreindȳri* < *hreinn*, reindeer + *dȳr*, deer], any of various species of antlered deer found in northern America, Europe, and Asia, the American species being called *caribou:* frequently domesticated for its milk, flesh, and hide, or for use as a draft animal.



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simplicity. His writing has succinctly been described as being "at home in the cowshed as in the lecture room." He may owe much more to his childhood memories than many of his literary countrymen. He did not attend public school and enjoy the traditional privileges of an English upper-class training, but spent his childhood years close to the soil on his father's prosperous Yorkshire farm.

Here, too, may lie the explanation of his respect for the primary laws of nature. We find it again and again in his writing, particularly in the first section of *The Innocent Eye*—an intuitive feeling for rhythm, balance, precision and economy. Although one reads with absorption the later sections which deal with his life in an orphanage school, his attendance at the University of Leeds, his encounters with the stark brutalities of World War I, or his explorations of a wide range of books, it is the first part which lingers in the mind long after closing the autobiography. Recalling the incident from Proust of the madeline dipped in tea, the reader is convinced that Read has captured here a similar sensuous, poetic mood in describing the innocence of the child's first awakening to his surroundings. He says, "The only real experiences in life are those lived with a virgin sensibility—so that we only hear a tone once, only see a color once, see, hear, touch, taste and smell everything once, the first time." Here we have the basic tenets of Read's philosophy. The child's eye being innocent, it sees the truth; it therefore becomes the artist's task to recover that innocence and thus recapture the vision of truth. Believing that every man has his own inner truth, his private fantasy or myth to be fulfilled, Read feels that only with the innocent eye may he fulfill it.

From now on we shall aways associate the word "critic" with Leo Stein. Reading his engaging "little debauch in the realm of ideas"—*Appreciation*—one wonders how one ever managed before without his sane judgment, his clear straightforward views on painting and literature. Not quite as world-renowned as his sister Gertrude, Leo Stein will, nonetheless, continue to be re-

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membered for his brilliant critical intelligence.

Shortly after the publication of *Appreciation*, he died in his home outside of Florence. The news was sad, but even sadder was the thought that he did not live long enough to see the unanimous applause his book received among the laity. I think he would have enjoyed knowing he had touched a common response in a world too often frightened and dismayed by the beauty at its disposal. For no author or critic fought a fiercer warfare against snobbery in the arts than Leo Stein. Not only did he liberate criticism of the arts from the snobs, delicate aesthetes and silly idolaters; he also recognized art as a part of our everyday lives, as a means of keeping the whole business of life going.

Stein tells us very little directly about himself in this book. Devoting only the last three chapters to his personal experiences, even here he dwells mainly on painters and poets, friends and associates he and his sister knew in Paris. Yet these provide fascinating, if indirect, glimpses of the man himself. One story in particular shows how well he understood Gertrude's whims, and yet how confident he was of his own insights into painting. It seems that after his first meeting with Picasso, Stein hastened to Sagot's and purchased one of Picasso's canvases. This particular canvas had for its subject "a nude, almost naked little girl" carrying a basket of red flowers. The picture moved Stein very deeply, but Gertrude disliked it instantly. She was dining when he returned home with it, and created quite a scene as soon as she saw it. "Now you've spoiled my appetite," she boomed, throwing down her knife and fork. "I hated that picture with feet like a monkey's." The rather ironic but charming postscript to this anecdote is that Gertrude refused to sell this same Picasso canvas in later years, and kept it until the end.

When we read what Leo Stein has to say on writing and reading and, above all, what he has to say about truth, we begin to see how incontrovertibly he was a critic of our times. He traces our muddled thinking—contributing to an even more con-

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fused way of living—to the fact that we may have forgotten or, perhaps, never learned "the relation of words to things." Shakespeare's style has it, he tells us—this using of words that are no more nor no less than the things to which they apply. "Logic will not help if one forgets the precise thing that one wants to say . . . the same holds true of reading . . . it makes much less difference what you read than how you read it." "The habit of veracity" was a fundamental principle during Stein's life. He never permitted himself to underestimate the supreme necessity of thinking and talking with precision.

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in his own integrity and even more, his certitude that the future would erase any scandal associated with his views on the homosexual instinct in *Corydon*. "The day will soon come when my *Corydon* will be found timorous. People will hardly be grateful to me for the desire for justice that constantly tempers my thought. I am hardly grateful to myself for it. Everything constantly tells me and proves to me that I was even more right than I thought. The examples I have at hand constantly contribute new proofs to what I put forward timidly." That day is already at hand.

Gide began keeping his first journal at the age of twenty (1889). His records for these earlier years are mainly concerned with himself—his introspection and his omnivorous reading. Already versed in the French classics, it was during these years that he read Baudelaire and Verlaine; Dante, Goethe and Shakespeare; Schopenhauer and Nietzsche; above all, the Bible. There are many who feel that a great deal of the conflict within him throughout his career may be traced to his strict Protestant upbringing. Certainly his self-scrutiny and his continual return to the problems of personal freedom are indicated in many passages, including this one from his later journals: "The only drama that really interests me and that I should always be willing to depict anew, is the debate of the individual with whatever keeps him from being authentic, with whatever is opposed to his integrity, to his integration. Most often the obstacle is within him. And all the rest is merely accidental."

Alyse Gregory acknowledges "life and art to be two quite different things," and words "but a pale reflection of the confusions and follies" in life, but her warm vibrant spirit and inquisitive, alert mind nonetheless take full command of her memories in *The Day Is Gone*. Apparently she has never lost the freshness of her poetical vision. Former editor of the *Dial*, widow of Llewellyn Powys, Alyse Gregory represents a generation in America's literary growth which later generations cannot afford to ignore. But aside from the American literary scene, described with an almost

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self-effacing reticence by one who played an active part in it, Miss Gregory contributes some remarkably understanding chapters on the early scenes of social unrest and the stormy days of suffrage and industrial injustices into which she was drawn before she began to write. She was an organizer for woman suffrage in Connecticut, New Jersey and New York. It was these interests that finally decided her against following a promising career as a singer.

This is a delightful book throughout—whether Alyse Gregory is writing about her childhood in Norwalk, Connecticut, or her travels abroad before she was twenty, or her impressionable years reading everything she could lay her hands on. "With Dostoievsky I lost all sense of my own identity. . . . James had a steadying effect and he is perhaps the novelist who, until I began to read Proust, influenced me most strongly." Throughout, she has that quality of intense perception that gives to each moment a value all its own. She says, "It is always the side shows I enjoy most in travelling—the dogs and cats following their caprices, the pale priests in their flying skirts, the old men nearing the end of their journey, the little children with delicate faces and flat heels, the young men lolling on the bridges, waiting for the girls to pass. All that in new surroundings shows the old recurrent surge of life captivates me." Here is the statement of a woman who has lived with zest and poetic intensity, writing about her "side shows" with an extraordinary lucidity and delicacy.

Sacheverell Sitwell represents all that is erudite, baroque and purposely idiosyncratic in English letters today. Youngest of that famous trio of Sitwells, about whom one of London's foremost wits has said, "They are the best diggers among our cultural excavators," he is the author of several volumes on art, architecture and the curiosa in social history. A poet, scholar and dilettante, he is no further removed from the family seat, Renishaw Hall, Derbyshire, England, than his sister or brother. It would appear that a childhood spent in that old Elizabethan manor house, with its amiable

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poltergeists, has had an enormous influence on all three Sitwells. Their themes are almost interchangeable. Sir Osbert writing his leisurely memoirs; Edith describing the dark treacheries in the young Elizabeth Tudor's court; or Sacheverell, as in this volume, guiding us through the palaces of Byzantine emperors, stopping to show us the hunts of Maximilian, or discussing the rose or the blue period of Picasso, and the famous clowns and dancers of the past—the three of them introduce us into "a world which seems to spin gently between the arbitrary but efficient poles of the Beautiful and the Absurd."

The Hunters and the Hunted is not what we would ordinarily term an autobiography. But when we look closely at this lush yet elegant medley, displaying an overwhelming knowledge of the strange and obscure in the arts, we are compelled to admire the intensity with which Mr. Sitwell pursues his aesthetic interests. Nor is it a surprise to learn that his favorite hobby is talking, for one never fails to get the impression

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that he is not only a cultured man, but gifted with a suave, beautifully cultivated voice, with which he is apt to bewitch even himself. He writes: "We promised an entertainment among the persons and buildings that are peculiar to our state of mind, fruits of the architectural and musical experience of half a lifetime. It has been flowering in these pages, but it is not complete."

We can make no mistake that Sacheverell Sitwell also belongs in this lively group of writers, who appear to such advantage when writing in an autobiographical vein. Egocentric, and with a strong penchant for the bizarre, Mr. Sitwell would add a certain piquancy, perhaps an exquisite mood of nonsense, to this circle of the elect where the qualities of humor, imagination, honesty and acute perception are given full play. "Each artist must find an individual solution of the dilemma which is implicit in his acceptance of society," concludes Herbert Read as spokesman for the group.

In the Autumn Number . . .

THE REVOLVING BOOKSTAND will present Lloyd Morris as guest reviewer.

THE READER REPLIES

(Continued from page 363)

political naïveté became evident in a recent conversation with the educational director of an organization dedicated to world peace. His tasks include that of educating the public concerning the over-all tasks, problems and objectives of the United Nations. He has encountered naïveté and specious reasoning for the retention of ideas imparted by college professors and newspaper columnists to such a great degree that it would embarrass the analytical minds of the past and present generations. Although his audiences have been by and large college graduates, that fact does not excuse them from the mental laziness. They "dared" anyone to challenge the words of the "experts."

It is not my intention to criticize those persons who, in the role of true scholars, are constantly examining the generally accepted theses. But I lose respect for persons who acquiesce to the arguments of writers and lecturers who are expressing essentially the same ideas through their columns, books and lectures as they did twenty years ago. Consciously or unconsciously, they are serving as the media for shaping public opinion; they are curtailing analytical research on the part of our most brilliant minds.

Individual rather than mass thinking must be encouraged. The same ideas about labor unions, minority rights, social needs and objectives, domestic and foreign policy, will prevail in the next generation unless a positive measure to stimulate individual thinking is adopted. Whereas principles do not change, the facts of changing societies necessitate a readjustment of our ideas, a reformation of public opinion.

Samuel P. Perry, Jr.
794 Tremont Street
Boston 18, Mass.

Monsignor Sheen and Mrs. Luce

I was unfavorably impressed by the spirit and content of the article "Monsignor Sheen and Mrs. Luce," and was especially astonished at its appearance in the pages of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. My recollection of previous articles, supplemented by a careful ex-

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amination of your volumes for several years past, does not show that you have heretofore published any article of this type. Here you present a lengthy attack on the views of two eminent Catholics—views based on their religion—in which the writer attempts to criticize their belief that Freudian psychoanalysis is harmful, and she thinks that the discipline of the Church in refusing to countenance it is "shocking." Frankly, neither of these matters is any concern of Miss Colby, and I am surprised that you found place for them in your pages.

The lady doubts Msgr. Sheen's veracity, as well as his accurate memory. Most people will believe the Monsignor. She doesn't like his "dubiously humorous quips": a matter of taste. She cites Einstein, Camus and Woolf on how to overcome fear. Untold millions of people through all the ages have found release from fear in faith, before Einstein, Camus and Woolf were ever heard of.

She practically accuses Mrs. Luce of misrepresenting Bertrand Russell. A comparison of the two "dictionaries" shows that her complaint of the changing of vital terms is unfounded. Mr. Luce substitutes "God" for "Yahweh," and "The Kingdom Come" for "The Millennium"; aren't they synonymous? She interpolates "The Apostles: Lenin, etc."; "The Seat of the Church: Moscow." Does Miss Colby question these? She objects that Mrs. Luce left out "past and future" after "history." Since when has history been "future"? This sort of thing looks like ingrained fault-finding.

The most valuable part of the article lies in the two paragraphs which the writer quotes from Mrs. Luce, explaining why a great psychiatrist must believe in God. Whether or not Miss Colby agrees with them—she doesn't say—they are most clearly and powerfully written, and it is a pity that she does not approach their sanity and cogency in the rest of her article.

The discussion as to whether or not Einstein is an atheist is left in the stage of personalities, after wasting some time on relativity, concerning which neither lady is any authority, and one of them is frank enough to admit it. I find nothing in the quotation from Einstein to disprove his atheism. He merely admits—as doubtless Harnack could have done—that there are forces which transcend his human intellect; very generous of him! He calls this being "devoutly religious."

The writer finds that someone makes "public affirmation" that belief in God is the sole property of the Catholic Church. Who is the culprit, Miss Colby? Give us chapter and verse. For one so facile in quoting, you are singularly vague on this important point.

Finally, the writer expresses great concern lest Catholics "can subjectify their fears as an organization"—whatever that may mean. They can "justify their intolerance and arrogance," she fears—in not believing in Freud, no doubt. This kind of talk will not disturb religious people, Catholics included. They will probably comment, as Pope did, long ago,

> All seems infected that th' infected spy,
> As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye.

Really, Mr. Editor, this article of Miss Colby's is most un-Scholarly, and might be mischievous. A summary criticism of it might well be the very words of its author: "One is tempted to state that she is dispensing a smattering of pseudo-knowledge on subjects she is not muscularly qualified to lift."

Since you ordinarily print so little giving the Catholic point of view, I trust you will find space for these comments.

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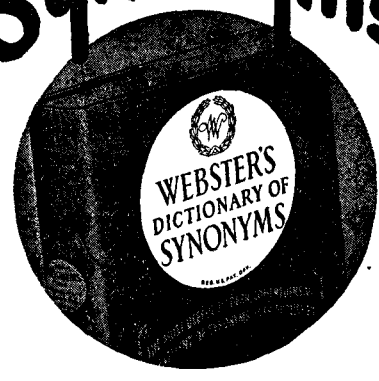

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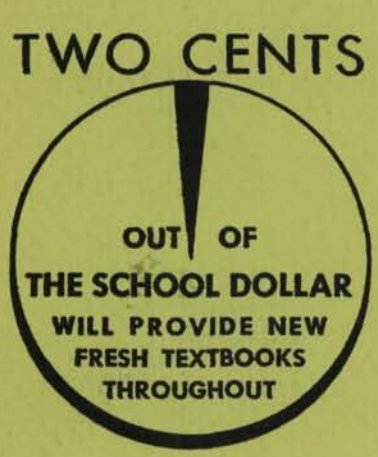

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